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# TOLD BY THE DEATH'S HEAD

"Stay, Constable, I want to see what you put into that fire pot—open it"

# TOLD BY THE DEATH'S HEAD

## A ROMANTIC TALE

BY

MAURUS JOKÁI

TRANSLATED BY

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*Translator of Prof. Haeckel's "India and Ceylon," Maurus Jokai's "The Nameless Castle," etc.*

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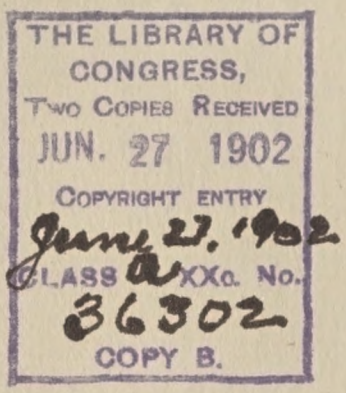


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# PREFACE.

In Part II, Vol. 2, of the Rhenish *Antiquarius*, I once came across a skull that is said—see page 612—to swing, enclosed in a metal casket, from an iron bar in the foundry of Ehrenbreitstein fortress. Distinction of this order does not fall to an ordinary mortal. Yon empty shell of human wisdom once bore the burden of no less than twenty-one mortal sins—the seven *originalia* trebled. Each crime is noted. The criminal confessed to the entire three-times-seven, and yet the death sentence was not passed upon him because of the twenty-one crimes. His fate was decided by the transgression of a military regulation.

What if this skull could speak? What if it could defend itself?—relate, with all the grim humor of one on the rack, the many pranks played—the mad follies committed, from the banks of the Weichsel to the delta of the Ganges!

If my highly esteemed readers will promise to give me their credulous attention, I will relate what was told to me by the death's head.

THE AUTHOR.

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*By Charles Hope Provost*

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# PART I.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE "FIRE-POT."

The hero of our romantic narrative, or better, narratives, was a constable. Not one of that useful class appointed, in our day, to direct the vehicles which pass over the two approaches to the suspension-bridge in Budapest; rather, he was the chief of a body whose task it is to provoke disturbance, who win all the more praise and glory the greater the havoc and destruction they create. In a word: he was a gunner.

The chronicle of his exploits gives only his Christian name, which was "Hugo."

In the year 1688, when the French beleaguered Coblentz, Hugo had charge of the battery in the outermost tower of Ehrenbreitstein fortress—the "Montalembert Tower."

Coblentz and Ehrenbreitstein are opposite one another on the banks of the Rhine, as are Pesth and Ofen; and the Blocksberg looks down on us, as does the citadel of Ehrenbreitstein on Coblentz.

The city, which is strongly fortified on all sides, had become accustomed to being beleaguered—now by the

French, now by the Prussians; today by the Austrians, tomorrow by the Swedes.

On the occasion of which I write, Coblentz was under a terrible fire from the French guns, which created great havoc in that portion of the city known as the "Old Town."

Specially memorable and remarkable was the manner in which the "fire-balls" seemed to know just where to find the abodes of the duke, and the commandant of the fortress. It mattered not how often they changed their quarters, the Frenchmen would always discover them, and aim accordingly—though it was impossible to see into the city from outside the walls. There certainly must have been some witchcraft at work. Hugo's Montalembert tower was on the side of the fortress most exposed to the assaults of the enemy; its successful defense, therefore, was all the more worthy of praise.

The management of ordnance in those days was not the comparatively simple matter it is today, with the Krupp and the Uchatius guns. It was a real science to fetch from the furnace a white-hot cannon-ball, ram it into the long, slender culverin, and if, after the discharge, the ball remained sticking in the throat of the gun, to remove it with the various forceps, nippers, and tongs; and, after every shot, to examine with a curious implement resembling Mercury's caducens, the interior of the culverin to learn whether the discharge had caused a rupture anywhere.

However, it is not necessary to be a great genius in order to master all the intricacies and technicalities of

a gunner's trade. An ordinary man might even learn, after some practice, how to handle an "elephant;" and, if he were intrusted with the quadrant, he might also manage to discharge the heavier bombs with satisfactory result. It must be remembered, though, that a gunner needs to possess considerable skill as well as experience in order to hurl successfully against the approaching foe a "fire-shield," which discharges simultaneously from every one of its thirty-five holes as many bullets; and the "storm-tub" requires even more dexterity. This implement of warfare runs on two wheels. The axles are spiked with keen-edged knives, and the wheels are filled with gunpowder, which ignites and explodes when the machine is set in motion. If the powder ignites promptly in both wheels at the same instant, the infernal thing dashes like an infuriated bull into the ranks of the enemy, burning the eyes of some, scorching the beards of others, and hacking and slashing everything with which its revolving knives come in contact. If the powder in only one of the wheels explodes, the machine spins around on the motionless wheel like a top, and scatters an entire company; if the second wheel explodes only half a second after the first, then those who have the management of the demon will do well to take to their heels with all speed possible.

It is not necessary to explain at length the advantages of the chain-shot. Anyone will be able to understand its operation if he will but remember that, when two balls connected by a chain are discharged toward the enemy, and one of the balls strikes a man, the other

ball will, naturally, circle around the unfortunate until the entire length of chain is wound tightly about him; the circling ball, meanwhile, will strike with various results: the head, the nose, the ear, or some other portion of the bodies of the soldiers within its radius. It is greatly to be regretted that the use of the "handle-ball" has been discontinued. This weapon was shaped very much like two pot-ladles, bound together at the handles by an iron ring. The man who chanced to be caught between the two ladles might congratulate himself that he escaped with nothing worse than a choking; while the two soldiers on his right and left, whose heads had been caught in the bowls of the ladles, would remember, to the end of their days, the peculiar and disagreeable sensation experienced. There were two more wonderful implements of warfare: one a German, the other a French invention. The former, which was an emanation from Hugo's brain, was called a "*Bombenjungen-werfer.*"* It was a huge mortar, the central cavity capable of holding a bomb of fifty pounds weight; surrounding this cavity were eight smaller bores, each holding a five-pound bomb. The same charge hurled every one of the nine bombs in rapid succession from the mortar; and one can imagine the astonishment of the Frenchman when, after hearing but one report, the eight "babies" followed, one after the other, the mother bomb.

This was a diversion Hugo prepared for the beleaguerers, who in return invented an amusement for him.

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**Anglice:* "Hurler of baby-bombs."

It was a "fire-pot," was shaped exactly like the earthen water-jug the Hungarian reaper carries with him to the harvest field to preserve his drinking-water fresh and cool. The machine was made of iron, and filled with a diabolical mixture. It had four spouts—precisely like our water-jug—from which the fire would hiss and sputter; it was intended to set fire to everything combustible where it fell.

The Germans also had what are called "fire-balls," which hiss and spit, and set fire to everything about them; and other bombs which explode the moment they touch the earth. The French fire-pot, however, combined these two properties: it set fire first, and exploded afterward.

The beleaguered understood very well how to manage a fire-ball. Like Helene Zrinyi, the heroine who defended the fortress of Munkács, the Germans had learned, so soon as a fire-ball fell inside the walls, to cover it with a wet bullock's-hide, which would at once smother the fire-spitting monster, and render it harmless.

But the fire-pot was not to be treated so summarily. If the Germans attempted to smother the fire-demon, to prevent the air from reaching his four noses, he would burst, and woe to him who chanced to be in the way of the flying splinters! He, at least, would have no further desire to sport with a fire-pot.

It happened one day that a fire-pot, which had fallen inside the fortress, did not explode after it had hissed and spit out its fury. When it became cool enough it was taken to Hugo.

"Now I shall find out what is inside this dangerous missile," remarked the constable; "then I'll make some like it and send them to our friends over yonder."

Over the neck of the fire-pot was a sort of hat, shaped like those covering the necks of the Hungarian wooden bottles (*esutora*). This hat, of course, could be removed. After this discovery Hugo invited the commandant, the grand-duke, the governor and mayor of the city, the syndic, and the duke's alchemist to be present at the opening of the fire-pot.

Now each one of the invited said to himself: "It will be enough if the others are there—why should I go? The infernal machine may explode when they are opening it."

And so they all stopped bravely at home and Hugo alone found out what was in the fire-pot.

After it was opened, and Hugo had convinced himself of the nature of the diabolical compound it contained, he proceeded to cast several fire-pots like the French one; and, in the presence of the commandant and the grand-duke, shot them into the enemy's camp. The two distinguished gentlemen, who were peering through their telescopes, were highly delighted when they saw the bombs, which flew through the air like dragons with tails of fire, reach the points at which they had been aimed, ignite everything inflammable, and afterward explode. Now and again it would happen that one of Hugo's fire-pots would fail to explode in the Frenchmen's camp, just as theirs would sometimes fail to do what was expected of them. But Hugo always collected the enemy's unexploded bombs, and,

after opening and refilling them with fresh explosives, would hurl them back whence they came.

Oh, I tell you war was conducted in those good old days on economical lines!

As late even as the year 1809 Napoleon had his men collect 28,000 of the enemy's cannon-balls on the battle-field of Wagram, and shot them back at the Austrians; and had the fight continued two days longer, the opposing armies would have ricocheted the same balls back and forth so long as the cannonading made it necessary.

The grand-duke, as was proper, rewarded the constable for his discovery by an increase of pay—from sixteen to twenty thalers a month; and in addition made him a present of a barrel of strong beer, which gave offence to the commandant, who was obliged to quench his thirst with a weaker brew.

Hugo had many enviers, but none of them ventured to pick a quarrel with him. He had the frame of an athlete; his face, with its luxuriant red-beard, resembled that of a lion. He was always in a good humor; no one had ever seen Hugo angry, embarrassed, or frightened. There were no traces of trouble and grief on his countenance. He was perhaps forty years of age, was somewhat disfigured by small-pox pits, but wherever there was a pretty girl or woman to be won, Hugo was sure to attract her. He was fond of good living—liked everything to be of the best, consequently his money never remained long in his pockets.

The constable's epicurean tastes irritated the mayor, who, as chief of the city militia, outranked the artiller-

ist. But Hugo managed on all occasions to out-do his superior officer. Rieke, the trim little suttler-wife, would slap the militia captain's fingers if he ventured to give her a chin-chuck, but a hearty hug from the smiling constable never met with a repulse. In consequence of the siege prices for the necessaries, as well as for the luxuries of life, had become exorbitant in both cities. Three thalers was the unheard-of price asked at market for a fat goose. The mayor's wife haggled for a long time about the price without success, when along came pretty Rieke.

"How much for your goose?" she asked.

"Three thalers."

"I'll take it."

She paid the money and marched away with the goose.

By some means the mayor learned that Hugo had a baked fat goose for his dinner.

"Look here, constable," he said next day to the artillerist, "how comes it that you can afford to feast on fat goose while I, the mayor, and your superior officer, must content myself with lean herring, cheese and bread? Your pay is only twenty thalers a month; mine is three florins a day. Pray tell me how you manage it?"

To which Hugo made answer:

"Well, mayor, if I wanted to deceive you, I should say that the money for all the good things I enjoy does not come from my pocket; that Rieke, who is infatuated with me (how I managed *that* part of the business I shouldn't tell you), supplies me with whatever I want.

But I'll be honest with you and tell you the truth—but pray don't betray my secret, for I don't want to have anything to do with the priests. What I tell you is in strictest confidence and must not go any farther: I have a magic thaler, one of those coins, vulgarly called a 'breeding-penny,' that always returns to my pocket no matter how often I may spend it—"

"You don't say so! And how came you by such a coin, constable?"

"I'll tell you that, too, mayor, only be careful not to let the Capuchins hear of it. I got the thaler in the Hochstatt marshes, from a *bocksritter*—"*

"I hope you didn't bond your soul to him for it?" interrupted the mayor.

"Not I. I outwitted the devil by giving the ritter an ignorant Jew lad in my stead."

"You must keep that transaction a secret," cautioned the mayor; then he hastened to repeat what he had heard to the grand-duke.

"Would to heaven every thaler I possess were a breeding-penny!" exclaimed the high-born gentleman. "It would make the carrying on a war an easy matter.'

From the day it became known that Constable Hugo possessed that never-failing treasure, a magic coin, and was in league with the all-powerful bocksritter, he rose in the esteem of his fellows.

Meanwhile Ehrenbreitstein and Coblentz continued under bombardment from the Frenchmen. The enemy's fire-pots never failed to find the grand-duke's

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*Satyr.

quarters, notwithstanding the fact that he changed them every day. This at last became so annoying that treason began to be suspected, and the duke offered a reward for the detection of the spy who gave the information to the enemy. That a spy was at work in the German camp was beyond question, though the outlets of both cities were so closely guarded that it would have been impossible for a living mortal to pass through them. Nor could the treason have been committed by means of carrier-pigeons, for, whatever of domestic fowl-kind had been in the cities had long since been devoured by the hungry citizens. The mayor, ever on the alert for transgressors, had his suspicions as to who might be the spy. Every man but one in the beleaguered cities fasted, lamented, prayed, cursed, wept, as the case might be, save this one man, who remained constantly cheerful, smiling, well-fed.

When one of the Frenchmen's fiery monsters came hissing and spitting into the fortress this one man, instead of taking to his heels and seeking the shelter of a cellar, as did the rest of his comrades, would coolly wait until the fire-pot fell to the ground, and, if it failed to burst he would dig it out of the earth into which it had bored itself and carry it to the foundry.

Surely this was more than foolhardiness!

The constable always opened the enemy's unexploded fire-pots in his subterranean work-room; refilled them there, then hurled them back without delay. There was something more than amusement behind this.

One day, when Hugo came up from his subterra-

nean workroom, he encountered the mayor, who said to him:

"Stay, constable, I want to see what you put into that fire-pot—open it."

Without a moment's hesitation Hugo unscrewed the lid and revealed the explosives wrapped in coarse linen; at the same time he explained how much gunpowder, hazel-wood charcoal, sulphur, resin, pitch, sal-ammoniac, borax and acetate of lead were necessary to make up the amount of unquenchable fire required for the bomb.

"Very good," quoth the city functionary, "but what beside these is there in the bottom of the pot?"

"Under this earthen plate, your honor, is more gunpowder. When the explosives on top are burnt out this plate, which has become red-hot, explodes the powder and bursts the bomb—that is the whole secret of the infernal machine."

"I should like to see what is under the earthen plate."

As the mayor spoke these words the constable gave a sudden glance over his shoulder. In the glance was expressed all the temerity of the adventurer, mingled with rage, determination and alarm. But only for an instant. The mayor's bailiffs surrounded him, closing every avenue of escape. Then he burst into a loud laugh, shrugged his shoulders, and said:

"Very well, your honor, see for yourself what is under the earthen plate."

The mayor forced open with the blade of his pocket-knife the earthen plate. There was no powder in the

bottom of the bomb, only some ordinary sand; but in it was concealed a folded paper that contained a minute description of the situation in the German camp.

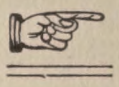
"Bind him in chains!" exclaimed the mayor in a triumphant voice. "At last we have the proofs of your treachery, knave! I'll give you a pretty Rieke! I'll serve up a fat goose for you!"

Hugo continued to laugh while the bailiffs were placing the fetters on his hands and feet.

As if to complete the evidence against him, there came hissing at that moment a fire-pot from the French camp. When it was opened and the earthen plate removed it was found to contain two hundred Albert thalers!

## CHAPTER II.

### THE TRIAL.



The hand with the two lines under it signifies, in the court records (for the sake of brevity), that at this point in the trial, the chief of the tribunal gave the signal to the executioner for another turn of the wheel. When this had been done, the notary would take down the confession until the prisoner on the rack would cry out:

"Have mercy!—compassion!"

The prince was seated at a separate table, on a black-draped throne-like arm-chair with a canopy.

The mayor occupied the inquisitor's chair.

First question addressed to the accused:

"What is your name?"

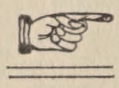
"My name, in Podolia, is 'Jaroslav Tergusko;' in Zbarasz it is 'Zdenko Kohaninsky;' in Odessa it is 'Frater Hilarius;' in Hamburg, 'Elias Junker;' in Münster it is 'William Stramm;' in Amsterdam, 'Mynheer Tobias van der Bullen;' in Singapore, 'Maharajah Kong;' on the high seas, 'Captain Rouge;' in The Hague, it is 'Ritter Malchus;' in Lille, 'Chevalier de

Mont Olympe;' in Pfalz, 'Doctor Sarepta;' here, I am called 'Hugo von Habernik.'

"Have you any more names?" inquired the chair.

At this question everybody began to laugh—the prince, the judges, the prisoner, even the skull on the table. The chair alone remained grim and dignified.

"I can't remember any more of my names," was the prisoner's reply.



SECOND QUESTION:

"What is your religion?"

"I was born an Augsburg Confession heretic. When I went to Cracow I became a Socinian; in the Ukraine I joined the Greek church; afterward I became an orthodox Catholic; later, a Rosicrucian; then a Quaker. I have also professed the faith of Brahma; and once I was a member of the community of Atheists and devil-worshipping Manichees, called also Cainists."

"A fine array, truly!" commented the chair, as the notary entered the list in the register.

THIRD QUESTION:

"What is your occupation, prisoner?"

"I have been ensign; prisoner; slave; robber-chief; parasite; ducal grand-steward; mendicant friar; recruiting sergeant; sacristan; knight; shell-fish

dealer; stock-jobber; ship-captain; viceroy; pirate; teacher; knacker's assistant; conjuror; bocksritter; hangman; pikeman; quack-doctor; prophet; constable—"

"Stop! Stop!" interrupted the chair. "The notary cannot keep up with you."

Again the court-room resounded with laughter; the prisoner on the rack, as well as the skull on the table, again joined in the merriment. Everybody seemed in a good humor—that is, everybody but the mayor. He alone was grave.

After the signal to the executioner the fourth question followed:

"Of what crimes are you guilty?"

(For the purpose of greater perspicuity the chair dictated to the recording secretary the Latin nomenclature of the crimes confessed.)

Prisoners: "I was a member of a band of robbers and incendiaries."

"*Primo, latrocinium,*" dictated the chair.

Prisoner: "I won the affections of my benefactor's wife."

Chair: "*Secundo, adulterium.*"

Prisoner: "I robbed a church."

Chair: "*Tertio, sacrilegium.*"

Prisoner: "I masqueraded as a nobleman under a false name."

Chair: "*Quarto, larvatus.*"

Prisoner: "I committed a forgery."

Chair: "*Quinto, falsorium.*"

Prisoner: "I killed my friend in a duel."

Chair: "*Sexto, homicidium ex duello.*"

Prisoner: "I cheated my partners in business."

Chair: "*Septimo, stellionatus.*"

Prisoner: "I betrayed state secrets confided to me."

Chair: "*Octavo, felonia.*"

Prisoner: "I used for my own purpose money belonging to others."

Chair: "*Nono, barattaria.*"

Prisoner: "I worshipped idols."

Chair: "*Decimo, idololatria.*"

Prisoner: "I married a second wife while the first was still living."

Chair: "*Undecimo, bigamia.*"

Prisoner: "I also took a third, fourth, fifth and sixth wife."

Chair: "*Eodem numero trigamia, polygamia.*"

Prisoner: "I murdered a king."

Chair: "*Decimo secundo, regicidium.*"

Prisoner: "I have been a pirate."

Chair: "*Decimo tertia, pirateria.*"

Prisoner: "I killed my first wife."

Chair: "*Decimo quarto, uxoricidium.*"

Prisoner: "I practiced conjuring."

Chair: "*Decimo quinto, sorcellaria.*"

Prisoner: "I have been in league with Satan."

Chair: "*Decimo sexto, pactum diabolicum implicitum.*

Prisoner: "I have coined base money."

Chair: "*Decimo septimo, adulterator monetarium.*"

Prisoner: "I preached a new faith."

Chair: "*Decimo octavo, hæresis schisma.*"

Prisoner: "I have been a quack doctor."

Chair: "*Decimo nono, veneficus.*"

Prisoner: "I betrayed a fortress intrusted to my guardianship."

Chair: "*Vigesimo, crimen traditorum.*"

Prisoner: "I have eaten human flesh."

Chair: "*Vigesimo primo, anthropophagia. Cannibalismus!*" cried the mayor in a loud tone, bringing his fist with considerable force down on the pandects lying before him on the table. The perspiration was rolling in great beads over his forehead.

The prisoner on the rack laughed heartily; but this time no one laughed with him. The executioner had mistaken the chief's wink for a signal to turn the wheel, which he did, and the sound which came from the victim's throat was a strange mixture of merriment and agony—as if he were being tickled and strangled at the same moment.

What the chief's dictation was really intended to signify was that the proceedings were concluded for the day; that the accused should be released from the rack and taken back to his dungeon.

It was a most unusual case—unique in the annals of the criminal court. Never before had a prisoner acknowledged himself guilty of, or accessory to, so many crimes. It was the first time such a combination of misdemeanors had come before the tribunal. The accused would certainly have to be tried without mercy; no extenuating circumstances would be allowed to interfere with justice.

The prince was extremely interested in the case.

He was curious to learn the coherence between the individual transgressions, in what manner one led to the other, and gave orders that the trial should not be resumed the next day until he should arrive in court.

The prisoner had cause for laughter. Before his confession reached its conclusion, before he could relate the history of his one-and-twenty crimes, the Frenchmen would capture Coblentz and release him from imprisonment and death.

But one may laugh too soon!

What was to be done with this fellow?

That the death penalty was his just desert was unquestionable; but in what manner should it be imposed? Had he confessed only the crime for which he was now under arrest—treason—the matter might be settled easily enough: he would be shot in the back. But with so many transgressions to complicate the matter it was going to be difficult exceedingly to pronounce judgment.

For instance: the wheel is the punishment for robbery; the polygamist must be divided into as many portions as he has wives; the regicide must be torn asunder by four horses. But how are you going to carry out the last penalty if the accused has already been carved into six portions? Also, it is decreed that the right hand of a forger be cut off; the servitor of Satan must suffer death by fire. But if the accused has been consumed by flames, how will it be possible to bray him to pulp in a mortar for having committed uxoricide? or, how carry out the commands of the law

which prescribes death by starvation for the wretch who is guilty of cannibalism?

After much deliberation the prince, with the wisdom of a Solomon, decided as follows:

"The prisoner, who is arraigned at the bar for treason, having confessed to twenty-one other transgressions, shall relate to the court a detailed account of each individual crime, after which he shall be sentenced according to the crime or crimes found by the judges to be the most heinous."

This decision was perfectly satisfactory to the mayor; and the judges gave it as their opinion that, as the accused would require all his strength for so prolonged an examination, it would be advisable to substitute the torture by water for that of the rack, as was first decided.

"No! no!" objected the prince. "The man who is forced to drink nothing but water is not in the mood to relate adventures (I know that by experience!) Let the prisoner be subjected to mental torture. Sentence him at once to death, and when he is not before the tribunal let him be shut up in the death-cell. The hours spent in that gloomy hole are a torture sufficient to bring any criminal, however hardened he may have become, to repentance. Besides, it will be a saving of expense to the city. The curious citizens, who like to gape at a condemned prisoner, will, out of compassion, supply this one also with food and drink. When he has eaten and drunk his fill, we will have him brought to the court-room. The man who has had all he wants to eat and drink is talkative!"

The judges concurred with his highness; but the mayor growled in a dissatisfied tone:

"This knave, who confesses to having committed twenty-one crimes in addition to the treachery in which we detected him, will, by the decision of his highness, fare better than his judges, who have learned during the siege what it is to hunger and thirst."

To which the syndic responded consolingly:

"Never mind, god-father! Let the poor wretch gormandize between the rack and the gallows. Remember the old saw: 'Today, I—tomorrow, you.'"

# PART II.

## CHAPTER I.

### WITH THE ROBBERS—THE PRSJAKA CAVES.

I was ensign in a regiment under command of General Melchior Hatzfeld of the imperial forces. (Thus Hugo began his confession the next day when he had been brought to the court-room from the death-cell.) My conduct at that time was exemplary; I acquired so much skill in handling fire-arms that, at the siege of Cracow, I was advanced to the position of chief gunner of a battery.

Cracow at that time was in the hands of George Rákóczy, prince of Transylvania, who had leagued with Sweden to subdue Poland; and he would most likely have succeeded had not the imperial army come to the assistance of the Poles.

I shall not dwell long on the siege of Cracow lest I awake in the minds of the honorable gentlemen of the court a suspicion that, by relating incidents not immediately connected with my transgressions, I am purposely prolonging my recital. I shall therefore speak only of those occurrences which it will be necessary to mention in order to explain why I committed the crimes of which I am guilty. While with the army

before Cracow I made the acquaintance of the daughter of a Polish noble. The young lady, who took a great fancy to me—I wasn't a bad-looking youth in those days, your honors—was a charming creature of sixteen years, with the most beautiful black eyes. If I remember rightly her name was Marinka. She taught me how to speak her language—and something else, too: how to love—the fatal passion which has all my life been the cause of much of my trouble.

During the siege my general frequently sent me to reconnoiter among the Hungarian camps; and as I was a fearless youth, I would venture to the very gates of the manor-houses in the neighborhood of Cracow. At one of these houses I met my sweetheart; and after that, you may guess, honored sirs, that it was not for the general's "yellow boys" alone I risked my neck night after night. No, my little Marinka's sparkling eyes were as alluring as the gold pieces; and I knew when I set out on my nightly tour that my sweetheart would be waiting for me at the gates of her father's place. But our secret meetings were at last discovered. There was an old witch of a housekeeper who ferreted out her young mistress' secret, and informed the old noble. One moonlight night Marinka was teaching me in her own little cozy chamber how to say: "*Kocham pana z calego zersa*"—which is "Mistress, I love you with my whole heart,"—when we heard her father's heavy footsteps ascending the staircase. I tell you I was frightened and said to myself, "This is the end of you, my lad!" but Marinka whispered in my ear:

"*Nebojsa!* (don't be afraid), go into the corridor, walk boldly toward my father, and to whatever he may say to you, do you reply 'God is One.' "

Then she softly opened the door, pushed me into the corridor, closed and locked the door behind me. The old gentleman was coming up the stairs very slowly because of a lame leg which he had to drag after him step by step. He had a square red face which I could see only indistinctly above the burning lunt he carried in one hand, blowing it continually to prevent it from going out. In the other hand he held a musket. The blazing lunt must have blinded him, for he did not see me until the muzzle of the musket came in contact with my breast. Then he stopped and cried in a stern voice:

"*Kto tam? Stoj!* (Who are you? Stand!)

"God is One," I made answer. What else could I have said? The old gentleman's aggressive mien changed at once. He became quite friendly; he extinguished the lunt by stamping on it with his foot, tapped my shoulder in a confidential manner and called me little brother. Then taking me by the arm he led me down the stairs to a room where a huge fire was blazing on the hearth. Here he bade me seat myself on a settee covered with a bear skin and placed before me an English flagon of spirits. After he had arranged everything for my comfort he fetched from a secret cupboard a small book—it was so small I could have hidden it in the leg of my boot—and began to read to me all manner of heretical phrases such as "There is no need for a Holy Trinity, because the little which is

done on earth in the name of God can easily be done by One alone."

My hair stood on end as I listened to the sinful words and I found what a trap I had fallen into. My Marinka's father was a Socinian, a leader of the heretical sect, and he was trying to make a proselyte of me.

The doctrines of Blandrata had spread extensively throughout Poland, but, owing to the persecution of its adherents, they could meet and work only in secret. The old noble's manor was one of their retreats, where recent converts were received for instruction. When the old gentleman believed he had enlightened me sufficiently he produced a heavy volume, bade me lay my right hand on it and repeat after him the vows of the society.

You may believe I was in a dilemma!

If I refused to repeat the vows I should have to confess that I had come to the manor for Marinka's sake, then the old noble would fetch his musket and send me straightway to paradise. If, on the other hand, I repeated the vows, then I was sure to journey to hades. Which was I to choose?

Should I elect to travel by extra-post, direct, without stopping, into the kingdom of heaven, or should I journey leisurely by a circuitous route, with frequent halts, to hades?

I was a mere lad; I was sorry for my pretty curly head—I chose the latter alternative!

From that time I became a daily visitor in the retreat of the followers of Socinus. Being a neophyte I was permitted to take part in their meetings only

during the singing; when the sermon began I was sent to the gates to guard against a surprise. This was a welcome duty; for, once outside the house, all thought of taking up my station at the gates would leave me and, instead, I would climb the tree which grew close to my Marinka's window, swing myself by a branch into her room, in which she was kept a prisoner by her father to prevent our meeting; and there, while the sages below-stairs expounded the dogma of the unity of God, we two ignorant young people demonstrated how two human hearts can become as one.

One day our little community received an unexpected addition to its membership. There arrived from Cracow a troop of Hungarian soldiers who announced themselves as followers of Socinus. They received a hospitable welcome from the old noble, whom they overwhelmed with joy by telling him the prince of Transylvania had become an adherent of Socinus; that his highness had averred that, were he the King of Poland, all persecution of the heretics should cease at once and that some of the churches should be given over to them for their worship.

When I repeated this piece of news to my general he became so excited he sprang from his seat—his head almost struck the roof of the tent—and shouted: "It is perfectly outrageous how those Hungarians will stoop to base methods in order to win allies! If they succeed in inveigling the Polish Socinians to their ranks then we may as well stop trying to get them out of Poland!"

Fortunately, however, there arose dissensions

between the Hungarian and the Polish adherents of Socinus. I must mention here, in order to explain how I became cognizant of the facts I am about to relate, that Marinka's father had begun to suspect me. Instead of sending me to stand guard at the gates when the sermon began, I was permitted to hear it and take part in the disputations.

The Hungarian troopers maintained that it was the duty of all pious Socinians to commemorate, at every one of their meetings, the death of the Savior by drinking wine; and they were so extremely devout that an entire quarter-cask of their host's best Tokay was emptied at every celebration. After the meetings, when the old noble would lift and shake the empty wine-cask, I could read in his countenance signs that heterodoxy was gradually taking root in him. At first he contented himself with remonstrating against the frequency of the celebration; surely it ought to satisfy the most devout member of the sect to observe the ceremony on Sundays, and holy days. But the troopers met his arguments with scriptural authority for their practices.

Then the old gentleman, finding his remonstrances of no avail, made an assault upon the dogma itself. He delivered an impassioned address in which he sought to disprove the divinity of Jesus. To this blasphemous assertion the Magyars made reply:

"If what you say be true, then He was the son of an honest man, and a good man Himself. Therefore, it is meet and right for us to show Him all honor and respect." And another quarter-cask was brought from

the cellar. The old noble became daily more fanatical in his assaults upon the tenets to which he had so devoutly adhered before the accession to his little congregation of the Hungarian troopers; and, at last declared that Jesus was a Jew; that He deserved to be put to death, because He had promulgated the unjust law of taxation. But not even this fearful blasphemy deterred the Hungarians from their frequent celebrations. They said:

"If the Nazarene is so unworthy, then it is our plain duty to shed His blood, the symbol of which is wine—"

"Tremendously clever fellows, those Magyars!" here interrupted the prince.

"They were impious devils!" exclaimed the mayor reprovingly. "Impious devils!"

"*Habet rectum,*" responded his highness. Then to the prisoner: "Continue, my son."

Hugo resumed his confession:

When the last cask was brought from the cellar the old noble declared to his congregation that the entire story of the Divine birth was a myth invented by the priests—

"And you took part in those blasphemous meetings?" sternly interrupted the mayor.

No, indeed, your honor! That is a crime of which I am guiltless. I never said one word; and escaped from the meetings whenever I could manage to do so. I had determined to flee with Marinka from the sinful community. Our plan was: I was to steal from the meeting on a certain night, assist my pretty Marinka to descend from her room by means of the tree outside

her window and then set fire to the sheep-stables. The conflagration would scatter the blasphemers; everybody would run to the stables to release the horses, and in the general confusion Marinka would hastily secure as many of the family jewels as could be packed into a portmanteau. Then she and I would mount two of the freed horses and gallop straightway to my camp, where I would introduce her as my wife—

"A pious idea, certainly," commented the prince.

"How can your highness say so!" in a tone of reproof, exclaimed the mayor. "It was incendiarism pure and simple: *Incendarii ambitiosi comburantur;* and further: *raptus decem juvencis puniatur*, and *rapina palu affigatur.*"

"Very well, then," assented his highness. "My son, for the incendiarism you shall be burned at the stake; for the rape of the maid you shall pay a fine of ten calves; for the theft of the jewels, the punishment is impalement. Continue."

Unfortunately, resumed the prisoner, our plans miscarried, through the intermeddling of the old housekeeper I spoke of. Her suspicions had been aroused by Marinka's preparations for flight; she informed the old noble, who set spies to watch me. I was caught in the act of firing the stables and was flogged with hazel rods until I confessed that I was a spy from the enemy's camp. The old noble wanted to bind me to the well-sweep; but one of the Hungarian troopers took compassion on me and offered to buy me for sixteen Polish groschen. His offer was accepted; I was sold to him and taken to Cracow. I

should not have had such a hard time as a slave had I not been compelled to grind all the pepper used in the Hungarian army. I ground enormous quantities, for the Magyars like all their food strongly seasoned with the condiment. My eyes were red constantly; my nose was swollen to the size of a cucumber. The only other complaint I had to make was that my master compelled me to eat everything that was set before me. He would say, when he placed before me enough for three men:

"You shall not be able to say that you hungered while you were my slave."

When I had eaten until I could not swallow another morsel, my master would seize me by the shoulders, shake me as one shakes a full bag in order to get more into it, and he would repeat the operation until the contents of every dish had been emptied into me. I used to sicken at the approach of meal-times, and whenever I saw the huge spoon—twice the size of my mouth—with which the food was ladled into me. Your honors will hardly believe that there is no greater torture than to be stuffed with food—

"We have never tried that method," remarked the prince.

"Nor are we likely to test it very soon," supplemented the mayor, with a grim expression on his countenance.

I yearned to be released from my unpleasant situation, resumed the prisoner. For the first time I realized the enormity of the transgression I had committed in joining the Socinian Community. Now I

had no one to intercede for me with the Supreme Ruler of the earth. Had I become a Mussulman I should have had Mohammed; had I adopted the Jewish faith I should have been able to call to my aid Abraham, or some one of the other fathers in Israel. But I had no one. However, my desire to be released from the tortures of food-stuffing and pepper-grinding was at last fulfilled; I was captured, together with the entire Hungarian army, by the Tartars—

"Hold! hold!" interrupted the chair. "You must not tell untruths. You forget that you were in Poland. The Tartars could not have fallen from the sky."

I was about to explain how they came to be at Cracow when your honor interrupted me. It was this way: His Majesty, the Sultan of Turkey, who had become angry because his vassal, George Rákóczy, prince of Transylvania, had presumed to aspire to the crown of Poland, had commanded the khan of Crim-Tartary to attack the Hungarians with 100,000 cavalry. The khan obeyed. He devastated Transylvania in his march, surrounded the Hungarian army in Poland and captured every man jack of them—

"The explanation is satisfactory," enunciated the prince. "It was easy enough for the Tartars to appear at Cracow."

Yes, your highness; but I wish they hadn't, continued the accused. No one regretted it more bitterly than did I. After the capture of the Transylvanian army by the Tartars the victors divided the spoils as follows: The commanding officers took possession of all the valuables; the under-officers took the prisoners'

horses; the captives themselves were sold to the common soldiers, each of whom bought as many slaves as he had money to spare.

My former master was sold for five groschen; my broad shoulders brought a higher price—nine groschen. The same Tartar—an ugly, filthy little rascal for whom I would not have paid two groschen—bought my master and me.

The first thing our Tartar master did was to strip us of our good clothes and put on us his own rags. He couldn't talk to us, as we did not understand his language; but he managed in a very clever manner to convey his meaning to us. He examined the material of which our shirts were made—the Hungarian's was of fine, mine of coarse homespun linen, and concluded that one of us was a man of means—the other a poor devil.

Then he took from his purse a gold coin, held it in his open palm toward the Hungarian, while with the other hand he hung a rope of horse-hair around his captive's neck. Then he closed his fingers over the coin, opened them again, at the same time drawing the rope more tightly about the captive's neck.

This pantomime signified: "How many coins like this gold one will your friends pay to ransom you?"

The Hungarian closed and opened his fist ten times to indicate "one hundred."

The Tartar brought his teeth together, which was meant to say, "not enough."

Then the Hungarian indicated as before, "two hundred," whereupon the Tartar placed the end of the rope

in the captive's hand—he was satisfied with the ransom. Then came my turn. How much ransom would be paid for me? I shook my head to indicate "nothing;" but in Tartary, to shake one's head means consent. The little fellow smiled, and wanted to know "how much?"

Not knowing how else to express my meaning, I spat in his palm, which he understood. He put the gold coin back into his purse, took out a silver one and held it toward me. I treated it as I had the gold coin. Then he produced a copper coin; but I indicated with such emphasis that not even so small a sum would be paid for me that he raised his whip and gave me a sound cut over the shoulders. The Tartars then set out on their return to Tartary. My former master and I were bound together and driven on foot in front of our owner.

How forcibly my sainted grandmother's words, "He that reviles his Savior will be turned into an ass," came home to me when I was given dried beans to eat—the sort we feed to asses at home. Dried beans every meal, and my Tartar master did not think it necessary to stuff into me what I could not eat. What were left at one meal were served up again the next. Still more forcibly were my grandam's words impressed on my mind when, the fifth day of our journey, I became a veritable beast of burden. My Hungarian yoke-fellow declared his feet were so sore he could go no farther. His was certainly a weighty body to drag over the rough roads, especially as he had never been accustomed to travel on foot *per pedes apostolorum.*

The little Tartar became alarmed; he feared he might lose the ransom if he left his rich captive behind, so he alighted from his horse, examined the Hungarian's feet and ordered him to get into the saddle. Then my feet were examined, and I imagined I too was to be given a mount. But I was mistaken. Before I could guess what he intended the little Tartar was seated astride my shoulders, with his feet crossed over my breast, and his hands clutching my hair for reins.

Luckily for me it was a lean little snips, not much heavier than the soldier's knapsack I was accustomed to carrying. It would have been worse had the Hungarian been saddled on my shoulders. That gentleman was greatly amused by the turn affairs had taken, and from his seat on our master's horse made all manner of fun of me.

He ridiculed my prayers, said they were of no avail where the enemy was concerned; that a hearty curse would give me more relief. I tell you he was a master of malediction! There was an imprecation he used to repeat so often that I remember it to this hour. I will repeat it for you—it is in that fearful Magyar lingo: "*Tarka kutya tarka magasra kutyorodott kaeskaringós farka!*"*

"Hold!" commanded the prince. "That sounds like an incantation."

"Like 'abraxas,' or 'ablanathanalba,'" added the mayor, shuddering. "We must make a note of it; the

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*The imprecation is really quite harmless, as are many other of the dreadful things attributed to the Magyars. It is, literally: "The spotted dog's straight upright spotted tail."—Translator's observation.

court astronomer may, with the assistance of the professors, be able to tell us its portent."

When the notary had taken down the imprecation, his highness, the prince, said to the prisoner:

"Continue, my son. How long were you compelled to remain in that deplorable condition of slavery?"

One day, resumed the accused, while I was fervently praying that heaven, or Satan, would relieve me from my ignominious situation, we turned into an oak forest. We had hardly got well into it, when, with a fearful noise, as if heaven and earth were crashing together, the huge trees came toppling over on us, burying the entire vanguard of the Tartar horde, together with their captives, under the trunks and branches.

Every one of the trees in the forest had been sawn clear through the trunk, but left standing upright, thus forming a horrible trap for the Tartars. The first tree that toppled over, of course, threw over the one against which it fell, that one in turn throwing over the next one, and so on until the entire wood was laid low.

My Tartar rider and I were crushed to the earth by the same tree. It was fortunate for me that I had him on my back, for he received the full force of the falling tree; his head was crushed, while mine was so firmly wedged between his knees I couldn't move. The horrible noise and confusion robbed me of my senses; I became unconscious. It is, therefore, impossible for me to tell how I escaped with my life. I only know that when I came to my senses I found myself in the camp of the "Haidemaken," a company of thieves and

murderers, made up of all nationalities, the worst of all the robber bands that infested the country. The members were the outcasts of every land—the flower of the gallows. When inflamed with wine, they fought each other with axes; settled all disputes with knife and club. He who had become notorious for the worst crimes was welcomed to their ranks; the boldest, the most reckless dare-devil, became their leader. They would release condemned criminals, often appearing as if sprung from the earth at the place of execution, bear away the miscreants, who, naturally, became members of the band.

Was a pretty woman condemned to the stake for violation of the marriage vow or for witchcraft, the haidemaken would be on hand before the match was applied to the faggots, and bear away the fair culprit. In a word, the haidemaken were the hope, the comfort, the providence of every miscreant that trembled in shackles.

The band claimed no country as fatherland. Every wilderness, every savage ravine, from the Matra mountains to the Volga, offered them a secure retreat. They knew no laws save the commands of their leader, which were obeyed to the letter. None kept for himself his stealings; all booty was delivered into the hands of the leader, who divided it equally among the members of the band.

To him who, through special valor, deserved special reward, was given the prettiest woman rescued from the stake, the dungeon, the rack.

Where the haidemaken set up their camp, the

Roman king, the prince of Transylvania, the Wallachian woiwode, the king of Poland, the hetman of the Cossacks, ruled only in name. The leader of the robbers alone was the law-giver; he alone levied taxes, exacted duties.

The trading caravans passing from Turkey to Warsaw, if they were wise, paid without a murmur the duty levied by the haidemaken, who would then give the traders safe conduct through all the dangerous forests, over suspicious mountain passes, so that not a hair of their heads would be hurt or a coin in their purses touched.

If, on the other hand, the caravan leaders were unwise, they would employ a military escort. Then, woe to them! The robbers would lure them into ambush, scatter the soldiers and plunder the caravan. He who resisted would be put to death.

There was constant war between certain nobles and the robbers. If the band, however, could be brought to seal a compact of peace with an individual or a community, it was kept sacred, inviolable, as we shall see later.

The haidemaken never entered a church unless they desired to secure the treasures it contained. Yet, they numbered several priests among their ranks. They were such as had been excommunicated for some transgression.

The band never set out on a predatory expedition without first celebrating mass, and receiving a blessing from one of these renegados. If the expedition proved to be successful, the priest would share the spoils, and dance with the robbers to celebrate the victory.

When one of the band took unto himself a wife, a renegado would perform the marriage ceremony. The haidemaken were as great sticklers for form as are the members of good society. To abduct a maid, or a woman, was not considered a crime; but for one member to run away with the wife of another was strictly prohibited.

They did not erect strongholds, for they knew where to hide in mountain caverns and in morasses, from which no human power could drive them.

In their various retreats they had stores of food, enough to stand a siege for many months. How great was their daring is best illustrated by the plot which threw me into their power. The prince of Transylvania had invaded Poland with an army of 20,000 men. This army was captured by the Tartar khan with his 80,000 men. Four hundred of the robbers laid in wait for this combined force, and slaughtered the vanguard of 2,000 men in the oak forest, as I have described.

When I opened my eyes after the catastrophe, I was lying on a bundle of faggots on the bank of a purling brook. By my side stood a gigantic fellow, with a hideous red face—compared to him the Herr Mayor, there, is a very St. Martin!—his beard and eyebrows were also red, but of a lighter shade. His nose was cleft lengthwise—a sign that he had had to do with the Russian administration of justice. He had the muscles of a St. Christopher.

At a little distance apart stood a group of similar figures, but none was so repulsive in appearance as the

giant by my side. He was leaning on his sword, looking down at me, and when he saw my eyes open he said, or rather bellowed, for his voice was more like the sound that comes from the throat of a bull:

"Well, young fellow, are you alive? Can you get up on your knees? If so, swear that you will join our band, or I'll fling you out yonder whence I brought you, to perish with the rest of your comrades."

I had heard many fearful tales of the dreaded haidemaken, and knew them to be capable of any atrocity. Moreover, I was indifferent as to what became of me, so I said I would join the band if my life were spared.

"What are you?" then asked the red one, who was the leader of the band, "peasant or noble?"

I was not lying when I answered that I was as poor a devil as ever caught flies to satisfy a craving for food.

"That is well," returned the leader, "we have no use for nobles in our ranks. You shall stand the test at once." He blew a whistle, and two sturdy ruffians dragged from a cave nearby the loveliest maid I had ever set eyes on. Her complexion was of milk and roses; every virtue beamed in her gentle countenance. I can see her now, with her golden hair falling to her ankles—and she was very tall for a woman.

"Now lad," continued the leader, "we shall see how you stand the test. You are to cut off this maid's head. She is the daughter of a noble, whom we stole for a ransom; and, as her people have seen fit to ignore our demands, she must die. Here, take this sword, and do as you are bid."

He handed me his sword, which was so heavy I could lift it only by grasping it with both hands.

The maid knelt in the grass at my feet, bent meekly forward, and parted her beautiful hair at the back of her snowy neck, so that I might the more easily strike the fatal blow.

But I didn't do anything of the sort!

Instead, I flung the sword at the feet of the leader and cried:

"Go to perdition, you red devil! You may devour me alive—I won't harm a hair of this pretty child's head."

"Ho-ho," bellowed the red one, "you have betrayed yourself, my lad! Were you a peasant you would cut off the girl's head rather than lose your own. You are a noble—you would rather die yourself than harm a woman. Very well; so be it! On your knees! The maid will show you how to cut off a head at one blow. She is my own daughter."

He handed the sword to the maid, who had risen to her feet and was laughing at me. She took the heavy weapon in one hand and swung it as lightly as if it had been a hazel rod, several times about her head. I have always been fortunate enough to be able to command my feelings, no matter what the situation; no matter how extreme the danger, I never allow myself to yield to fear.

I looked at the wonderful maid confronting me with mocking eyes, her white teeth gleaming between her red lips, her beautiful hair shining like gold.

"Kneel!" she cried, stamping her foot. "Kneel and say your prayers."

A faint-hearted fellow would, most likely, have lost courage; but, as I said before, I had never made the acquaintance of fear. So I laughed, and said: "I am not going to kneel; and I am not going to pray. I don't want to part with my head, I have too much need of it myself." Then I turned boldly toward her father, and addressed him: "Captain, I want to marry your daughter," I said. "Let me serve under you for one year, and, if at the end of that time I have not proved myself worthy to be your son-in-law, you may cut off my head, and welcome!"

The robber chief received this daring speech with a grin that was like the grimace of a hungry wolf preparing to devour a lamb.

"Fellow, do you know what you ask?" he bellowed. "The suitor for the hand of my daughter is tortured to death by that hand if he fails to perform the tasks she sets for him."

"All right!" I returned jauntily, "you needn't give yourself any trouble about me."

He held out his hand; I gave him mine, and the pressure it received in the powerful grasp was so severe that the blood spurted from under the finger-nails. But I did not betray by look or sign how badly it hurt me. Nay, I even gave a playful pinch with the crushed fingers to the cheek of the golden-haired maid and received from her in return a sound slap on my hand.

I could see that my behavior won favor in the eyes

of the robbers. But we had little time for merry-making. The main body of the Tartar army now drew near, and we were face to face with an infuriated enemy outnumbering our band a hundred to one.

In face of the extreme danger which threatened, our leader remained calm. At a signal from him, his men with lightning speed set fire in fifty different places to the fallen trees, among which a considerable number of the vanguard, who had not been crushed to death, were hiding.

Of course the poor wretches, Tartars and captives alike, were consumed in the flames; we could hear their shrieks of agony when we were half way up the mountain, to which we had made our escape.

The Tartar army not being able to follow us, because of the burning forest, made our escape easy; and, by the time the trees had been reduced to ashes, we were far enough away, and in a place of safety.

Instead of giving me weapons to carry, I was compelled to continue in the role of beast of burden; a heavy bag of treasure was strapped on my back. We marched until the next morning. The haidemaken travelled only by night, consequently they were familiar with all roads and mountain passes.

When day broke we halted to rest and partake of a scanty meal. While we were eating, the leader asked me my name, and I gave him the first one that came into my head: "Jaroslaw Terguko," which was the name of Marinka's father. If I couldn't steal anything else from him I could at least steal his name?

Late in the afternoon we set out again on our

journey, which led us over rugged paths and through savage gorges where no signs of human life were to be seen. At last we entered a deep defile between two mountain spurs. The walls of rock on either side seemed, with their projections and hollows, as if they might once have been joined together. They were nearer together at the top than at the base, and when I looked up at the narrow strip of sky far, far above me, I had a sensation as if the two walls were coming together. In this almost inaccessible defile was the chief retreat of the haidemaken. It was a stronghold that could successfully defy all human assaults.

In the south wall, about twenty yards from the base, yawns the mouth of a huge cavern.

At that point the wall is so steep, and inclines forward to such a degree, that access to the cavern cannot be gained by means of a ladder. The robbers, however, had contrived a clever hoisting apparatus.

From the top of the opposite wall a mountain brook had once leaped into the defile, to continue its way over the rocky bed into the valley.

When the haidemaken first established themselves in the cavern, it happened frequently that they would be blockaded in their retreat by the nobles and their followers, who had pursued the predatory band to the defile.

At such times the robbers suffered greatly from the scarcity of fresh water, especially if they chanced to be out of wine. Therefore, they conceived the plan of conducting the brook from the opposing wall into the cavern through a stout oaken gutter, and the water at

the same time served to turn a series of wheels. Over one of the wheels ran a stout iron chain, to which were securely attached several large baskets; and so skillfully was the apparatus manipulated that the entire band might be hoisted into, or let down from, the cavern in the short space of two hours. It was a most admirable contrivance for the robbers, but not so admirable for the dwellers in the valley. The intercepted brook now flowed into the cave, and, as the water did not fill the cave, the most natural conclusion was that it found an outlet through various subterranean fissures.

The turning of the water from its original channel caused Prince Siniarsky considerable inconvenience, in that all his saw-mills, flour-mills and leather factory were left without a motor; while the inhabitants of the surrounding hamlets, who were dependent on their looms for a livelihood, were compelled to remove to another region, because they now were unable to bleach the linen.

Still greater was the misfortune which had overtaken Count Potocky. He was the owner of extensive salt mines on the further side of the mountain, which contains an illimitable deposit of the saliferous substance. The haidemaken were unable to drink the water of the lakelet in the bottom of their cavern, because of its saline character.

After the course of the brook had been changed, the worthy Count Potocky discovered one day that innumerable springs of fresh water were bursting from his side of the mountain, and flooding his most profitable

mines. If he attempted to obstruct the flow of water in one place it would break out in another.

At last the two magnates discovered the cause of the mischief, and determined to oust the thievish haidemaken from their retreat by fumigation. So long as the band confined their depredations to the trading caravans they might be tolerated; but, when they became insolent enough to interfere with the comfort and convenience of the magnates, it was high time to put a stop to their pestiferous conduct!

And so an expedition against the cavern was planned. Before it could be carried out the war against the Transylvanians and Swedes broke out, and the noble gentlemen were compelled to march with their followers toward the invaders; but when hostilities ceased and the succoring Tartars had returned home, a formal blockade of the robbers was constituted.

The entrance to their cavern, which is about as large as the door of the cathedral at Coblentz, was fortified by a double parapet furnished with loop-holes. The intercepted brook did not pour its waters into the main entrance, but into a side opening, underneath which was the hoisting wheel. This wheel also turned the mill-stone, which ground the rye used by the robbers.

The band included a miller as well as a smith, a shoemaker and a tailor. As it is dark in the cave, all work was performed by torchlight. Where all the torches used in the cavern were procured I learned afterward.

The fore part of the cavern, into which the rays of the blessed sun penetrate as far as the opposite wall permits, is like a vaulted hall. In it were stored the weapons: all manner of fire-arms, all patterns of cutting, thrusting and hurling implements, which had been purloined from the armories of noble castles. Here, for the first time, I saw an old-time culverin, rusty with age and for want of care. In this part of the cavern were stored also the provisions in huge stone receptacles—enough to feed four hundred men during a long siege.

From the provision chamber a low, narrow passage leads to the mill-cave, but, as I never entered it, I cannot tell you just what it contained.

The main cavern is spacious as a church. When the entire band were assembled in the vast hall they were as lost in it. The arched roof is so high above the floor it is invisible in the gloom, which not even the light of many torches can dispel.

From this hall numerous narrow passages and corridors lead to smaller caves, in which the artisans of the band performed their labors. These unfortunates certainly must have been captives; for it is hardly possible that any man would, of his own free will, consent to pass his life toiling in so gloomy a hole. When we arrived at the cavern the leader asked me if I had a trade, and, as I could truthfully reply that the only one I was perfectly familiar with was that of bombardier, I did so.

"Very good; you shall soon have an opportunity to prove that you understand your trade as thoroughly as

you say," he growled. "It is not safe to boast here, my lad, and not be able to perform—as you shall soon learn."

Meanwhile the robbers had hoisted to the cavern the booty taken from the Tartars. It was stored in one of the smaller chambers, into which I merely got a glimpse, as they rolled the huge slab of granite from the entrance, but that fleeting glance was enough to dazzle my eyes. There were heaps on heaps of costly articles: robes, mantles, vestments, richly embroidered with gold and precious gems, gold and silver chalices, shrines, *ciboria*, pastoral staffs, and a host of valuables too numerous to remember. Had the haidemaken only decided to disband then, every one of them would have received a fortune as his share of the plunder.

It is not to be wondered at that such stores of gold and silver had accumulated. The robbers never had occasion to need money.

The provision chamber was filled with food and drink. Such quantities of meat and bread were served that every man had all he wanted to eat, while casks of metheglin were constantly on tap.

The secret of this inexhaustible food supply was known only to the leader and his daughter. No matter how much was taken from the provision chamber, no decrease was ever noticeable.

The first evening of our return, the successful expedition was celebrated by a feast. After the robbers had eaten their fill, they lighted a huge fire and danced wildly around it; and when they had drunk all they

wanted, they gathered about their leader and his daughter, who had taken their seats on an estrade draped with purple cloth.

Then a pale-faced young man was dragged into the hall and placed in front of the leader.

I saw now that a sort of trial was about to be held, a singular tribunal, where the judge and the jury first get tipsy!

"Jurko," said the leader to the youth, "you are accused of cowardice—of having run away at the approach of the enemy; also, of having neglected to give warning of the coming of the Tartars."

"I am not guilty," responded the youth in defence. "You placed me on guard to watch for the Tartars. Instead of the Tartars came wolves. Ten of the beasts attacked me—maybe there were fifty. If I had allowed the wolves to eat me, how could I have signaled to you? I didn't run away—I hid in a hollow tree to defend myself—one against fifty! I call that brave, not cowardly."

"Silly chatter!" bellowed the leader. "No matter what happened, you should have obeyed the command of your leader. If you are not the coward you are accused of being, then prove it by standing the test."

"That I will!" cried the youth, striking his breast with his fist.

The leader rose, took his daughter's hand, stepped down from the estrade, and, bidding his comrades follow, moved with the maid toward the rear of the cavern, which, until now, had been buried in midnight gloom.

Here the ground slopes steeply downward, and I could see by the light of the torches that we were on the verge of an abyss, at the bottom of which was water.

The leader held a wisp of straw to a torch, then tossed it into the abyss, which was lighted for a few seconds by the circling wreath of blazing straw; but it was quite long enough for me to see the terrible grandeur of the yawning gulf.

After tossing the straw into the abyss, the leader snatched the red and yellow striped silken kerchief from his daughter's neck, leaving the lovely snow-white shoulders and bosom uncovered, and flung it also into the abyss.

"There, Jurko," he cried, "you have often boasted that you are the bravest of our band, and you have aspired to the hand of my daughter Madus. If you are what you pretend to be, fetch the bride's kerchief from the lake down yonder."

The youth stepped boldly enough to the rim of the yawning gulf, and every one believed he was going to dive into it. But he halted on the edge, leaned forward and peered down at the water far below. After a moment's survey, he drew back, rubbed his ear with his fingers and made a wry face.

"Why don't you jump?" cried his comrades, tauntingly.

Jurko cautiously thrust one leg over the edge, bent forward and took another look; then he drew back his leg and rose to his feet.

"The devil may jump into this hell for me!" he exclaimed; "there's no getting out of it again for him who is fool enough to enter it!"

"Ho, coward! coward!" derisively shouted his comrades, rushing upon him. They disarmed him and dragged him by the hair toward a cleft in the wall of the cavern, wide enough only to admit the body of a man. This opening was closed by a block of granite that required the combined strength of six men to move it. A lighted candle was placed in the trembling youth's hand; then he was thrust into the rock-tomb, and the granite door moved back to its place. The wild laughter of his comrades drowned the shrieks of the victim who had been buried alive.

Then followed the "dance of death," and I never witnessed anything more terrifying. The lovely Madus feigned death and looked it, too! and every member had to dance a turn with her. When it came my turn, the leader said to me:

"Hold, lad, you may not dance with Madus until you have become really one of us—until you have stood the test. Moreover, you, too, presume to aspire to the hand of my daughter."

"Yes, I do!" I replied, "and I will do whatever I am bid."

"Very good; the bride's kerchief lies down yonder in the lake; let us see if you are courageous enough to go after it."

"You surely did not undertake so foolhardy a task?" here interrupted the prince; and the chair dictated to the notary as follows:

"Sinful tempting of providence, prompted by criminal desire for an impure female."

"Yes, your highness, I performed the task," continued Hugo, "but I beg your honors not to register the leap as an additional transgression. I am not responsible for it. I was compelled to jump or be buried alive in the wall of the cavern. Besides, I knew the danger was not so great as it appeared. When a boy, I once visited a salt mine. I had seen by the light of the blazing straw that the walls of the abyss were formed of the dark blue strata peculiar to salt mines, and guessed that the lake was strongly impregnated with salt. I had also noticed on the further wall of the abyss a flight of steps hewn in the rock, and concluded that I had nothing to fear from drowning in the buoyant water, if I reached it in safety. But, before I proceed farther, I desire to enter a formal protest against the chair's designating my beloved Madus an 'impure female.' She was pure and innocent—an angel on earth, a saint in heaven. He that defames her must do battle with me—my adversary in coat of mail, I in doublet of silk. The weapons: lances, swords, or maces—whatever he may select; and I positively refuse to proceed with my confession until his honor, the mayor, has given me satisfaction, or amended the protocol."

"Well, mayor," said the prince, addressing the chair, "I think the prisoner is justified in his protest. Either you must amend the protocol, or fight him."

The former expedient was chosen, and the notary erased the latter clause of the protocol. It read, when

corrected: "Sinful temptation of providence by chaste affection for a respectable maid."

"Now, my son, you may jump."

Hugo thanked the prince and resumed his confession:

I pressed my ankles together, bent forward, and sprang, head foremost, into the abyss. As I sped swiftly downward, there was a sound like swelling thunder in my ears, then I became stone deaf, and the water closed over me. My eyes and mouth told me it was salt water, and whatever apprehension I had had vanished. The next moment I was floating on the surface, my head and shoulders above the water. I soon found the kerchief, which I tied about my neck, amid the acclamations and cheers of my comrades, which were multiplied by the echoing walls to the most infernal roaring. The torches held over the mouth of the abyss gleamed through the darkness like a blood-red star in the firmament of hades.

A few vigorous strokes propelled me to the steps leading from the lake to the upper gallery of the abyss, which is really an abandoned salt mine.

There are one hundred and eighty steps, but by taking two at a time I reduced them to ninety; and three minutes after I had taken my leap, I stood, encrusted from head to foot with salt—like a powdered imp!—before my blushing Madus.

She received me with a bashful smile when the robbers carried me on their shoulders to her, and I was about to kiss her, when the leader seized me by the collar and drew me back.

"Not yet, lad, not yet!" he cried. "You have only been through the christening ceremony. Confirmation comes next. You must become a member of our faith before you can become my daughter's husband. Every man that marries a princess must adopt her belief."

Now, as your honors may have guessed, the question of religion was one I did not require much time to answer. I consented without a moment's hesitation to adopt my Madus' faith. The leader then signed to one of the band to prepare for the ceremony of confirmation. It was one of the priests of whom I have spoken—I had taken particular notice of him during the feast, because he ate and drank more than any one else.

"He that becomes a member of our society"—the leader informed me—"must take a different name from the one he has borne elsewhere. I am called 'Nyedzviedz,' which signifies either 'the bear,' or 'without equal.' What name shall we give you?"

Some one suggested that, as I was an expert swimmer, I should be called "Szczustak" (perch); another thought "Lyabedz" (swan), more suitable and prettier, but I told them that, as I excelled most in hurling bombs, "Baran" (ram), would be still more appropriate; and Baran it was decided I should be called.

In the meantime the robber priest had donned his vestments. On his plentifully oiled hair rested a tall, gold-embroidered hat; over his coarse peasant coat he had drawn a richly decorated cassock; his feet were

thrust into a pair of slippers, also handsomely embroidered—relics, obviously, of some gigantic saint; for the robber priest's feet, from which he had not removed his boots, were quite hidden in them. In his hands he held a silver crucifix; and as I looked at him, the thought came to me that he had, without a doubt, made way with the original wearer and bearer of the rich vestments, and the crucifix.

He ordered me to kneel before him. I did so, and he began to perform all sorts of hocus-pocus over me. I couldn't understand a word of it, for he spoke in Greek, and I had not yet become familiar with that language. I learned it later.

After mumbling over me for several minutes, he smeared some ill-smelling ointment on my nose; then he fumigated me with incense until I was almost suffocated. In concluding, when he bestowed on me my new name, he gave me such a vigorous box on the ear, that it rang for several seconds, and I almost fell backward. The blow was not given with the hand of the priest, but with the sturdy fist of the robber.

This is carrying the joke too far, I said to myself; and, before the ruffian could guess what I intended, I was on my feet, and had delivered a right-hander on the side of his head that sent his gold hat spinning across the floor, and himself, and his slippers after it.

"*Actus majoris potentiae contra ecclesiasticam personam!*" dictated the mayor to the notary; while his highness, the prince, held his stomach, and laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks.

"I should like to have seen that performance!" he exclaimed when he had got his breath again. "Did the padre excommunicate you?"

Not much, he didn't, your highness! From that moment I became a person of consequence among the haidemaken. The leader slapped me heartily on the shoulder, and said approvingly:

"You're the right sort, lad—we need no further proof."

After a bumper all 'round, to celebrate my entrance to the community, every man wrapped himself in his bear-skin, and lay down on the floor of the cavern. Although the torches had been extinguished I could see, by the faint light which penetrated from the entrance, that Madus ascended a rope ladder to a deep hollow high up in the wall, and drew the ladder up after her.

In a very few minutes the snores from the four hundred robbers proclaimed them oblivious to this work-a-day world.

At day-break the watchman's horn brought every man to his feet; at the same moment the leader appeared from an adjoining chamber, and gave to each one his task for the day.

After we had breakfasted, Nyedzviedz conducted me, in company with Madus and several of the band, to the armory.

"Here Baran," he said,—thrusting his foot against the culverin I mentioned before—"you claim to be a skilled bombardier. Let us see if you understand how to manage a thing like this. We stole it from Count

Potocky's castle, and brought it here with great difficulty. Sixteen men would carry it two hundred steps, then other sixteen would relieve them, and so on. We didn't find out until we had got it up here that it would be of no use to us. The first time we tried to fire it off—it lay on the ground as now—four men sat astride of it, as on a horse, to steady it. I, myself, directed the shot toward the mouth of the cavern, and three men stood behind me to observe operations. When I applied the fuse, the infernal thing sprang into the air flinging the four men astride it to the roof of the cave; while the ball, instead of going where I had aimed—out of the entrance—imbedded itself in the wall over yonder, where it still sticks."

I laughed heartily at his amusing description of the gun's behavior; whereupon he said soberly:

"Oh, you may laugh, but it was no laughing matter I can tell you! I made a second attempt. I tied a rope around the rascal's neck to prevent him from kicking again, and fastened the ends securely to two stout pegs driven into the ground. 'There, sir,' I said, 'now kick if you want to!' I lighted the fuse—the demon didn't kick this time; instead he rushed backward dragging both pegs with him; broke the right leg of one of the men, the left of another, and both legs of the third; and the ball bored itself into the corner over there. Now let us see if you can do any better."

"Oh, you stupid bear!" I exclaimed, unable to restrain my mirth, "you may thank your stars that the rusty old gun didn't burst into flinders and kill every one of you!—as you deserved! The first thing to be

done with the culverin is to clean and polish it until it shines like a mirror. Then—who ever heard of laying a cannon on the ground to fire it off?—it must have a sort of platform on wheels so it can be moved about."

The leader immediately gave orders to the smith and the wagon-maker of the band to obey my instructions and complete as quickly as possible the sort of gun-carriage I should describe to them, and I set about at once to clean and scour the old culverin which, with the accumulated rust of years, was no light task.

There was no time to lose, for the Tartars, with their Hungarian captives, having vacated Poland, the Polish magnates returned to their castles, and prepared to carry out the plans for punishing the insolent haidemaken, which had been interrupted by the war. Those members of the band who were sent on various errands into the regions adjacent to the Prsjaka Gorge, brought back, instead of booty, bloody heads, and the startling news that the roads leading to the Gorge were filled with armed troopers.

The two despoiled magnates had combined their forces, and were prepared for a regular siege of the plundering haidemaken.

The latter, however, merely laughed at the warlike preparations. They were not afraid of a siege! Nyedzviedz, on learning of the approach of the beleaguerers, instead of curtailing our rations, doubled them, mystifying all of us by the seemingly illimitable supplies in the provision chamber. We received, every

day, double rations of fresh goats' meat and mutton, and yet there was not in any of the caves even the sign of a living animal.

Meanwhile the beleaguerers advanced steadily.

There was a stratagem the robbers had frequently resorted to in order to vanquish a beleaguering foe. They opened an underground sluice through which the water of the salt lake in the bottom of the abyss would rush into the defile and drown the enemy. But Prince Siniarsky's troopers had become familiar with this trick; and one morning, when we awoke, we found that a stone wall had been built across the gorge while we slept. An arched opening in the center of the base would give egress to all the water we might choose to let out of the lake.

This was bad enough, but worse came later.

The wall increased in height every night. I told Nyedzviedz at the beginning what would be the outcome of such a proceeding; when the top of the wall should have reached to the height of the wooden gutter which conveyed the brook into the cavern, Siniarsky's men would fling a line over it, attach a stout chain to the line, and when they had drawn it over the gutter it would be easy enough to pull it down.

"In that case we shall die of thirst," growled the leader, "for there isn't any other water in the cavern fit to drink. But a still greater danger, of which you know nothing, threatens us."

He did not tell me what it was, but he became so morose and ill-tempered, that no one but his daughter ventured to speak to him.

The haidemaken made several assaults on the wall, but the troopers returned the fire with such volleys from the numerous loop-holes in it, that our men were always forced to retreat.

All hopes were now centered in me, and on the culverin, which I had polished until it shone like gold. The carriage for it had been completed, and balls cast under my directions.

The wall grew higher and higher, until at last the top was on a level with our conduit. Its completion was celebrated in the enemy's camp by the blaring of trumpets, and beating of drums, and what I had foretold came to pass; the arquebusier mounted to the top of the wall, adjusted his arquebuse on its forked rest, and prepared to take aim at our water conduit.

"Now, watch me!" said I to Nyedzviedz, pointing the culverin's muzzle toward the cornice of the wall.

Two shots sounded simultaneously, and when the smoke had cleared away, there was neither arquebuse, nor arquebusier—nor yet the cornice of the wall, to be seen. All three had vanished.

I took aim a second time—this time at the base of the wall; and at the sixth shot, the entire structure of solid masonry tumbled down with a deafening crash, burying under it the musketeers who were at the loop-holes. Not one of them escaped alive.

The haidemaken, with loud cries of triumph, now hastily descended from the cavern in their baskets, and flung themselves on the enemy, and while the combat raged in the defile below me, I wheeled my culverin to

the mouth of the cavern, and hurled shot after shot toward the troopers who were hurrying to the aid of their comrades.

The enemy was completely routed, and our men returned to the cavern richly laden with spoils.

So all-powerful is a cannon when its management is thoroughly understood.

"That will do for today;" at this point observed the prince. "The confession will be continued to-morrow."

## THE VISZPA OGROD.

The next morning Hugo resumed his confession:

When the haidemaken, after having put to flight the troopers returned with their booty to the cavern, the leader said to me:

"Well, Baran, you certainly earned your name today, by proving yourself a most effective 'ram.' To your assaults with the culverin we owe our victory. Here is the treasure we took from the vanquished foe—take of it what you want, you have the first choice." Gold and silver galore lay before me, but I answered: "Thank you, Nyedzviedz, you know very well I have no use for money; instead, I want your daughter—for her alone I have served you; she is the reward I desire."

To this reply the leader shook his head irritably, and said: "I am disappointed in you, Baran. You are, after all, only a tender-hearted dove that wants to bill and coo. The man who has a wife is only half a man. The true haidemak embraces his sweetheart, then slays

her—or better: slays her first. Why do you desire to marry? Be wise, lad, and remain a celibate. If you will think no more of Madus I will make you my second in command."

"But I can't, and won't think of anything but Madus," I returned, stubbornly; "and if you don't give her to me, you are not a man of your word.

"You don't know what you are asking, Baran," again said the leader. "If you persist in your demand you will compel me to send you the way all our members have gone who proved themselves to be soft-hearted doves. The man who wants to bill and coo cannot remain with us. If you marry Madus you must leave us."

I told him I would manage somehow to endure such a calamity, which made him laugh heartily.

"I know very well, Baran, my lad, that it would not grieve you to leave us, if you were allowed to depart with Madus to the outside world. But that may not be. The man we pronounce a 'dove,' must go a different route. The youth who refused to leap into the abyss the day you arrived, was a dove. You saw what became of him. A hundred and more love-lorn swains, and cowards have gone the same way. You will find in every crevice the skeletons of the unfortunates. Do you still desire to join the ghastly company?"

It did not sound very alluring—to celebrate one's nuptials among cadavers; but when I looked at Madus, who was standing by her father's side, the

glance which met mine from her beaming eyes banished from my thoughts everything but her beautiful image, and I said:

"It matters not whither I go if my Madus goes with me—be the journey to hades itself!"

When Madus also declared she had no dread of undertaking the journey with me, her father summoned a priest—the same bearded rascal that had performed the ceremony of confirmation over me.

His vestments this time were even more magnificent —('acquired,' I have not the least doubt, from some wealthy cathedral by my respected father-in-law and his comrades) and with all manner of unintelligible mummery he performed the ceremony, which united me and my beloved Madus in the holy bonds of matrimony.

When the marriage ceremony was concluded, my wife and I each received from her father a costly, gold ornamented cap, and a richly embroidered mantle; a bag of provisions, and a jug of wine were also given to us. Then we were conducted to the same cleft in the wall of the cavern, in which the unfortunate Jurko had been entombed.

When the heavy rock had been removed from the opening the robbers, one after the other, shook hands with us. The leader was so deeply affected he embraced both of us. After a lighted taper had been placed in my hand, we were thrust into the narrow passage which was immediately closed behind us.

The noises in the cavern sounded like the low murmur one hears in a sea-shell held close to the ear. By

the faint light from our taper I could see a smile of encouragement on my Madus' face, and obeyed without a question when she bade me follow her.

We had forced our way through the narrow passage, which was hardly wide enough for one person, a considerable distance, when we suddenly came to a small chamber about the size of a room in a pleasant cottage. Here, Madus said, we should have to rest and pass the night.

"Night?" I repeated. "We can easily bring the blackness of midnight upon us in this hole! We have only to extinguish the candle. But we shall never know when it is morning. Daylight never enters here. No cheerful cock-crow ever reaches this tomb. Here, no one will come to rouse us, and say: 'Rise, rise! morning, beauteous morning, is come.' "

"Fie, fie, Baran," chided my Madus. "Do you already regret the step you have taken? Should you be sorry never again to see daylight—now that you have me with you?"

"No, no," I answered, promptly, ashamed of my momentary regret. "No, no," and I set about preparing for our night's rest. We spread our bear skins on the floor of the cave, sat down on them, and ate our supper, becoming quite cheerful as the wine sped with pleasurable warmth through our veins.

Suddenly Madus turned toward me and asked:

"Where do you imagine we are, Baran?"

"In paradise," I made answer, kissing her.

Thereupon she roguishly blew out the light, and asked again: "Can you see me?"

"No," I answered, for I could see nothing at all. "Look again, Baran, and repeat after me what I say."

I fixed my eyes where I believed her to be, and repeated after her, word for word, the Lord's Prayer, the *Ave Maria* and the *Credo*, and as I did so, it seemed to me as if the dear child's countenance came into view, gradually growing brighter and brighter, until the gloom disappeared, and the subterranean grotto became irradiated as with the sunlight of noon. I did not tell her so, though, for women are so easily made vain; but from that moment I became convinced that Madus was my guardian angel.

Never, in all my life, have I been so happy as I was with my beloved Madus in that underground cave, and I should have been content to stop there with her until the end of time! I would not have inquired if ever a morning would dawn again for us, had not Madus roused me from a sound slumber, and lighted the taper.

"What do you imagine will become of us?" she asked, and I replied:

"I believe the haidemaken are playing a trick on us, and that they will fetch us away from here after a while."

"No, you are mistaken, Baran, we shall never again return to the cavern. The haidemaken do not expect to see us again."

"But, surely, Nyedzviedz will not allow his only daughter to perish miserably in this hole?" I exclaimed.

"Alas, you don't know him, my poor Baran," returned Madus sorrowfully. "My father's heart is

impervious to pity. Those whom he banishes, as we have been banished, can never return to the cavern."

I now became alarmed in earnest. Until that moment I had entertained a suspicion that the haide-maken were only trying to frighten me.

I was cursing my folly—mentally of course—for having allowed the fascinations of a love-dream to lure me to so wretched a fate, when Madus rose from her bear skin couch, and bade me follow her. I remembered her radiant countenance of the preceding evening, and my confidence in her was restored.

We passed onward, through the narrow corridor which traversed numerous caves, larger and smaller than the one in which we had rested. I kept glancing furtively, right and left, expecting every moment to see the helpless skeletons with which Nyedzviedz had tried to intimidate me.

On, on we pressed, occasionally passing the entrance to a cave that was stored with all manner of plunder. At last I noticed that the corridor began to widen, and suddenly my soul was rejoiced to discover, far ahead, a faint gleam of light that became brighter and brighter as we approached. It was daylight!

"Hurrah!" I shouted aloud, in my ecstacy clasping Madus to my heart. "We are free! We are free!"

"Free? No, my Baran, far from it!" she returned gently and sadly. "We are approaching our life-prison. You will soon see it."

The passage was now wide enough for the two of us to walk side by side. We did not need the taper now, for we had sunlight from the strip of blue sky

we could see overhead. I pressed eagerly forward to see more of it. I could have drunk in at one long breath the entire heaven.

At last we arrived at the end of the passage between the two tall walls of rock, and there below us lay the Viszpa Ogrod, which means: "Island Garden."

And it is a veritable island; only, instead of water, it is encompassed by rocks—rocks so high, and so steep, that nothing wingless can ever hope to escape over them into the world outside.

Heaven-towering walls of basalt, naked cliffs, sheer inaccessible, dome-shaped, and truncated, ranged one against the other in a compact mass like the facade of a vast cathedral, environ the Viszpa Ogrod, which, with its verdant fields, forest, fruit and vegetable gardens, lies like a gleaming emerald in a setting of rock, at the bottom of the deep crater.

From the dizzy heights of the cavern wall leaps a stream, that is transformed to iridescent spray before it reaches the valley, there to pursue its sinuous course amid the fields, gardens, and tiny white dwellings upon which we looked down as through a misty veil.

"That is our future home," whispered Madus. "Our life-prison from which there is no escape. To this island garden is banished all those haidemaken who prove too tender-hearted for their cruel trade, or tire of their adventurous life; also those who refuse to desert the women they love. Here, the banished dwell together and till the ground—they will never again see any other portion of the globe than this little valley."

The Viszpa Ogrod revealed the secret of the haidemaken's power to defy a siege. This island garden made it possible for them to defy all the troops sent against them, for it contained an inexhaustible supply of provisions. When the robbers discovered it, it was a wilderness of stunted fir trees. No living creature could exist in it, for there was no water until the brook, conducted into the cavern from the opposite side of the defile, found an outlet into it, thence, through the ground, into Prince Siniarsky's salt mines.

The water very soon wrought a wonderful change in the aspect of the valley. A portion of the stunted forest was cleared, and the ground planted with rye, vegetables, and various shrubs and plants which throve luxuriantly in this "garden" sheltered from the cold winds by the wall of rock. The firs left standing put forward new growth, and became stately trees—everything, even the human beings that came to dwell here, underwent a complete transformation.

True, those whom the haidemaken sent to the valley had already become tender-hearted, or, weary of the wild life of the robbers; but, no matter what the life of a man had been before he became a member of the little community in the island garden, there he would forget the entire world, become an entirely new being.

I speak from experience, for I, who have enjoyed a full share of this world's pleasures—everything that can rejoice the king in his palace, and the dreams of the prisoner in his dungeon—I never was truly happy until I went to dwell with my beloved Madus in the Viszpa Ogrod.

A narrow path winds from the outlet of the rock-corridor down into the valley. Madus, who was perfectly familiar with the path, led the way, recognizing, while still at a distance from them, each occupant of the little cottages. The children ran to meet us, and, on hearing from Madus who I was, seized our hands, and with shouts of joy drew us toward the village.

A bell was rung to announce our arrival. Later I learned from the inscription on this bell that it had formerly swung in the tower of Bicloviez monastery. Like everything else in the valley, it had been stolen. Everything, even the beautiful cloth and silk garments which clothed the women—nay the women themselves, were plunder.

Robber and robbed dwelt together amid plunder in harmony, happy as Adam and Eve in Eden. They ploughed, planted, and gathered the harvest in perfect contentment. They shared their abundance with the cavern, and received in return plunder from all parts of the world.

As I have said before, there were no animals in the Viszpa Ogrod when the robbers discovered it, and as it was impossible to convey full-grown cattle through the narrow passage from the cavern, calves, goats, and lambs instead were brought to the valley, which had become so well stocked with everything necessary to sustain a large army, that no potentate on earth could have reduced the haidemaken to starvation, no matter to what length the siege might have been extended.

The only danger which threatened the cavern was the stoppage of their water supply. Were that cut off,

the luxuriance and fruitfulness of the valley would vanish, and it would become again an arid wilderness uninhabitable for man and beast. This was the danger dreaded by Nyedzviedz when the troopers began to build their wall in the defile.

The dwellers in the Viszpa Ogrod lived together like the family of Father Abraham in the promised land. The eldest of the men was the patriarch. He made all the laws; issued all the commands; allotted to each one his task and share of the harvest, giving to everyone as much as was required for the needs of himself and his household.

There was no priest in the valley. There was no Sabbath. The pleasant days were working-days; when it rained everybody rested.

There was no praying, no cursing, no quarreling. There, where every head of a household had once been a thief, no disputing about mine and thine was ever heard. There, every woman—and not one of them had been given an opportunity to vow fidelity to her mate before the altar, but had been forcibly conveyed to the valley—was so faithful, so modest, that no stranger could have told what was the color of her eyes.

When Madus and I arrived in the valley, Zoraw, the patriarch, prepared for us a feast, to which were invited the rest of the community to the number of eighty. After the feast, Zoraw conducted us to the brook, where we drank with everyone the pledge of fraternity from a wooden bottle of fresh water—that being the only beverage in the valley. At the conclusion of this

ceremony, the bottle was broken in pieces, to symbolize unalterable alliance.

Then Zoraw measured off and assigned to us our plot of ground. The entire community lent a hand, and in two days our cottage was under roof, modestly furnished, and ready for occupancy. In the stable stood a cow and a goat for the housewife. When we were comfortably settled in our new home I was asked by the patriarch what manner of tools he should give me; and finding that I should be compelled to work—something I had never learned at school, or in the field—I chose the trade of smith, which would at least give me the handling of iron, without which I never felt contented.

I became accustomed in a very short time to my new mode of life. I would work at my trade the allotted time every day, then go home to my wife, who would tell me how the ducklings had got smothered in the shell, how the milk had turned sour, and such like prattle. And one day she whispered blushingly in my ear the secret which makes the husband's heart beat faster with joy and pride. In listening to it, I forgot everything else in the world. The thought that I was to become the father of a family, that would grow up to know no other home but this peaceful valley, filled my soul with joy and content. This thought became to me what roots are to a tree; it attached me so securely to my little plot of ground, that I felt as if no power on earth could tear me away from it. My beloved Madus, and our little home, became doubly dear to me. Had all the wealth, all the splendor that

came to me later, been offered me then in exchange for my Madus and the humble little home she filled with her joyous presence, I should have refused with scorn.

## THE KOLTUK-DENGENEGI.

I had become perfectly satisfied with my peaceful and uneventful existence. My entire world now lay within the rocky rim of the Viszpa Ogrod. My entire happiness lay in the beaming smile with which my Madus greeted my home-coming every day. My labors in the smithy were always over by noon; the afternoons were devoted to work required to be done at home.

One day I was siting in the hall-way of our cottage busily employed fashioning, from some crimson willow withes, a pretty basket-cradle, when a shadow suddenly shut out the sunlight from me. I looked up and was startled to see Nyedzviedz standing in the door-way.

"You here!" I exclaimed. "Have you, too, been relegated to the Viszpa Ogrod because of the softened heart? Or have you come here to hide from an enemy?—Which?"

"Neither, my good Baran," answered the leader. "I am not come to stop in this happy valley, but to fetch you away from it. We need you in the cavern. We cannot get on without you. We are planning a most important expedition, and need your assistance. A rich caravan is on the road to Mohilow; it is made up of Russian, Turkish and Jew traders, and is accompanied by a military escort. We propose to capture this caravan, and take possession of all the treasure

and valuables, after which, we shall proceed to Berdiczov and loot the monastery. As the monastery is strongly fortified, and garrisoned, we shall have to batter down the walls; therefore we must take you with us, as you are the only one who understands how to handle our field gun. I shall appoint you second in command of the expedition."

Madus had come from the kitchen while her father was speaking. She was not in the least glad to see him; on the contrary, she greeted him with a frown, and demanded angrily:

"Why do you try to lure my gentle-hearted Baran away from me? He does not need your stolen treasure. He has all he wants here in his humble home. You buried us here—we are dead to you, therefore leave us here in peace."

To which Nyedzviedz made answer by saying: "Baran, does the father or the husband control the wife? If you, the husband, don't know how to control your wife, I, her father, will show you what to do with the woman who speaks when she is not spoken to."

I well knew what a hasty temper was the leader's, and persuaded Madus to come with me to the kitchen, where I gently argued away her opposition to my leaving home. I assured her it would be for our good; that when I had got together enough money to keep us in comfort I should return, and find a way to escape with her from the valley to some large city, where we should be safe from the haidemaken, and where she might sweep the dusty streets with a long-tailed silk gown, and be addressed as "gracious lady."

This had the desired effect. She wept bitterly; but she bade me go with her father. When I turned to cast a last look into the valley, before we entered the rock-corridor, I could see my poor little wife's red kerchief still gleaming in the doorway of our cottage. Her favorite dove had flown after me to the entrance of the corridor; there it settled down on my shoulder and began to coo into my ear. I had to fling it away from me quite forcibly in order to frighten it back to its mistress. My former comrades greeted me with loud cries of welcome, and celebrated my return by a tremendous drinking-bout.

When, after my long abstention from it, I again tasted wine, I forgot the Viszpa Ogrod and everything connected with it—as one will, when awake, forget even the most enchanting dreams.

It is a well-known fact that the wine-drinker who abstains for a long period from his favorite beverage, then yields again to the temptation, becomes a more inveterate drunkard than before he resisted the fascinations of the cup. The haidemaken drank only Tokay; they made a point of selecting from the cellars of the prelates, and magnates whom they plundered, only the best vintages.

The following night we set out for Mohilow, a twelve days' journey.

I am almost willing to wager that not a soul, in the region to which we were going, really believed such a band of robbers as the haidemaken was in existence—or, if it had ever been heard of, the tales of its mar-

velous exploits were looked upon as kindred to the fables repeated in the nursery.

As I said before, the band always traveled by night. During the day we rested, hidden in a dense forest, or in an uninhabited valley.

We never entered a village to procure food, but carried with us rations of dried meat, varying our diet with mushrooms collected on the way.

On learning definitely from the scouts we had sent to reconnoiter that the caravan was expected to reach Mohilow on a certain day, we concealed ourselves in a swampy thicket by the side of the road over which it would have to pass. Here we were forced to wait two days, during which our meat gave out, and we had to eat raw frogs and birds' eggs. The peasant carts passing along the road, with pretzels, smoked sausages, cheese, mead and wine for the market at Mohilow, were not molested by the hungry robbers, who would only have needed to stretch out their hands to secure the good things for which they languished. But the leader would not allow it.

"We are here to fight, not feast," he said.

Our patience was well nigh at an end, when, one day, the sound of a trumpet and drum announced the approach of the caravan.

On mules, on horses, camels, and ox-carts, came the fifteen-hundred-odd human souls, their escort, a valiant company of soldiers in coats of mail, and helmets, and armed with halberds, and muskets. It was a motly crowd, outnumbering our band in souls; but inferior to us in strength.

When, at a preconcerted signal, our men dashed from the thicket, the entire caravan fell into confusion. The soldiers fired off their muskets, heedless where they aimed; we, on the other hand, sent our shots where they would prove most effective.

A frightful tumult ensued—it was: save himself who can; while the heavily laden carts and vans were left behind.

I must admit that the haidemaken behaved atrociously. Never, in all my experience on the battlefield, did I witness such a scene of carnage. It made me ill; I became so faint with horror and disgust I sank unconscious to the ground.

When I came to my senses, I saw a Turkish merchant hobbling on a crutch toward me. He was old, and seemed to have been seriously wounded, for he was covered with blood. He came straight toward me, and, sinking to the ground by my side, said in a pleading tone: "My son, I beg you, take my yataghan, and cut off my head."

Your honors may believe that I was startled by so singular a request.

"I shan't do any such thing!" I replied promptly, and with decision.

"Pray do," he urged. "Cut off my head without further parley, and you shall have this koltuk-denigenegi," which is Turkish for "beggar's staff."

"No, Baba," I returned, with the same decision as before. "I can't cut off your head, for I have no grudge against you. I am not an assassin—though I do belong to the haidemaken; I was forced into this

band, much as Pilate was thrust into the *credo*—against his will, I'll warrant!"

"Your countenance tells me, my son, that you are better than your comrades," said the old Turk. "For that reason I ventured to ask a favor of you. Come, hesitate no longer to perform the deed of mercy for which you shall be handsomely rewarded. Decapitate this old body; it will not be assassination; one can murder only a living being—so says the Koran, the only truthful book on earth—and I cannot strictly be called a living being. I have a deadly wound in the abdomen, and am bound to die sooner or later. Besides, I am prepared and desire to die. I can't flee any farther; and if I fall into the hands of your cruel comrades I shall be horribly tortured. Therefore, I beg you to release me from further suffering; cut off my head with this beautiful yataghan, which shall also be yours."

But, not even then could I bring myself to grant his prayer, and relieve him of his sufferings and his bald head.

"Leave me, Baba," I exclaimed impatiently. "If you want to get rid of your head, cut it off yourself with that beautiful yataghan; or else, hang yourself on one of those beautiful trees over yonder."

To this the old Turk responded with pious mien: "That I dare not do, my son. The Koran—the only truthful book on earth—says, there are seven hells: one underneath the other, and each one more terrible than the one above it. The first hell is for true believers, like myself; the second is for Christians; the

seventh is for the Atheists. The fourth, Morhut, is for those persons who commit suicide. Were I to take my own life, I should have to descend to the fourth hell, where, as well as in every one of the three hells above it, I should be obliged to remain three-hundred and thirty-three years before I should be permitted to enter paradise. Whereas, if I should lose my life at the hands of an unbeliever like yourself, I should—so says the Koran, the only truthful book on earth—go straightway to paradise."

And still I hesitated; though it seemed but kindness to grant the old Turk's request, and send him speeding straightway into paradise. But, I remembered that our Bible (really the only truthful book on earth) says: "Thou shalt not kill;" and thrust the importunate old fellow away from me.

But he renewed his pleading with increased urgency: "See, my son, I will give you this koltuk-den-genegi—" "Of what use would that crutch be to me?" I interrupted.

"If you will screw off the top you will see that the crutch is filled with gold pieces," he replied; and to prove that he spoke the truth, he unscrewed the shoulder rest and shook several gold coins into the palm of his hand.

The yellow metal dazzled my eyes: "The crutch would hold a good many coins," I said to myself, to which added the Turk's pleading voice:

"You shall have it all, my son, if you will but grant my prayer."

And still I hesitated.

"I can't do it, Baba," I said. "Even if you gave me the crutch, I should not be allowed to keep the gold. No member of our band is allowed to keep for his own use alone any valuables that may come into his possession. Everything must be placed at once in the common treasury for the use of the entire band—and woe to the haidemak who would dare to keep for himself even a single Polish groschen! So, you see, Baba, your gold would be of no use to me."

"Listen to me, my son," again urged the wounded Turk, who was growing visibly weaker; "you are young; I can see that this wild life is not suited to you. If you had my gold, you could escape to Wallachia, buy an estate—a castle—serfs, and marry. Perhaps you already have a sweetheart—if so, why shouldn't you live in happiness with her, instead of skulking about in caves and swamps like a wild animal?"

This suggestion made me thoughtful. It brought back to my mind my dear good Madus. Ah! if only I might fly with her, far away, to some region where she might become a respected lady. If I had the Turk's gold! I could easily keep it secreted in the crutch. Some day, when the haidemaken were away on an expedition, I could easily stupefy the few members of the band remaining in the cavern by drugging their mead with Venice treacle; and when they were sound asleep I could fetch my Madus from the Viszpa Ogrod and with her escape to a far away land.

This thought impressed itself so deeply on my mind—it became so alluring that, unconsciously, my hand went out toward the beautiful yataghan.

"If I thought I could keep the gold hidden!" I said, unconscious that I had given voice to the thought.

"That will be easy enough; just leave it in the crutch," promptly responded the Turk. "When you join your comrades make believe to have taken cold in the swamp yonder, say that the muscles of your leg have contracted and made you lame. That will not only give you an excuse to use the crutch, but it will most likely get your discharge; a hobbling cripple is not a desirable comrade in a band of robbers."

Without waiting to see how I might take his suggestion, the Turk proceeded at once to show me how to bandage my left leg, so that it could not be straightened at the knee; how to keep my ankle against the crutch, and hobble along on the right leg. I thought of Madus, for whom I would have hobbled on one leg to Jerusalem, and let him show me how to transform myself to a cripple.

"Now, my son," he said, when he had delivered his instructions, "take my yataghan, my beautiful yataghan, and cut off my head—only don't hack it off as a butcher would with a cleaver. Swing the yataghan, thus, in a half-circle—easily, gracefully, as you would the bow of a violin. I will kneel here at your feet, bend forward, thus; then do you strike just here: between these two segments of the vertebræ. Be sure to keep firm hold on the handle to prevent the blade from slipping—"

He gave me so many directions, kept on talking so long that Satan, who is ever at one's elbow, gave my arm a sudden thrust, and, before I knew what had hap-

pened, a body minus a head lay at my feet, while a head minus a body was rolling down the hill—

"*Homicidium!*" dictated the chair to the notary. To this the prince appended:

"Under extenuating circumstances. We must not ignore the fact that the deed was committed at the urgent request of the decapitated—under approval of the Koran, and instigated, I might say, forced, to the act by the wicked one at the perpetrator's elbow."

"It was killing a human being, all the same!" said Hugo, "and I had cause soon afterward to repent most bitterly what I had done. After I had committed the bloody deed I set out to overtake my comrades. They had secured much valuable booty which they were carrying on their backs. When I came up with them, hobbling on one leg and leaning on my crutch, they broke into loud laughter:

"What the devil is the matter with you?" queried the leader.

"I am all used up!" I groaned. "I killed an old Turk, whose lame leg prevented him from running away with the rest of them; and before he gave up the ghost he cursed me and prayed that I might be compelled to hobble along on a crutch for the rest of my life. He had hardly got the words out of his throat before my leg became as you see it, and I can't straighten it."

"That comes of standing in the swamp—cold water will affect effeminate fellows like you in that way," observed Nyedzviedz. "But don't worry, we have

among us one who understands how to cure such maladies. Ho, there! Przepiorka, come hither."

I was frightened, I can tell you! If my leg were examined it would be found to be in a sound and healthy condition. But there was no help for it—I could not escape an examination. So I drew up the calf of the leg so tightly against the lower part of the thigh that Przepiorka, after he had tried several times in vain to straighten it pronounced it permanently crippled.

On hearing this decision, I forgot my role and would have straightened the leg to convince myself that it could be done; but, what was my consternation and alarm to find that I was unable to do it. The affliction I had pretended had come upon me in earnest! God had punished me. I was a miserable cripple, unable to take a single step without the koltuk-dengenegi.

How I cursed him who had left it to me in legacy!

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BERDICZOV MONASTERY.

"Don't worry," said Nyedzviedz again, when he saw my distress. "Don't worry! You can still be of great service to us, even if you are lame. We have long wanted to add to our number just such a cripple."

Then he summoned a sturdy, broad-shouldered robber and bade him take me on his back and in this fashion I journeyed with the band, the stronger members taking turns in carrying me.

When we arrived at Oezakover forest, where we halted to rest, the leader said to me:

"You will leave us here, Baran, and hobble to Berdiczov as best you can. I want you to spy out the situation there for us and get all the information you can. Then you will return to the cavern and on the news you bring will depend our plans of attack; I propose to capture the monastery."

The extraordinary success of the Mohilow expedition had made our leader so arrogant that, because he had, with three-hundred men vanquished two-thousand, half of whom were armed, he now aspired to nothing of less importance than a garrisoned castle.

And the wedge with which he proposed to force an entrance was my crippled leg!

From near and far—from distant lands even, all manner of crippled folk, and invalids afflicted with

divers maladies, journeyed to Berdiczov in search of healing. The indigent limped and hobbled on crutches to the miracle-working spot; the well-to-do rode on mules; the peasant was trundled in a barrow by his sturdy spouse; the tradesman travelled in his two-wheeled ox-cart; and the magnate was borne in his sedan-chair by his servants.

Berdiczov monastery was the property of the Premonstrant monks. It stood on an elevation in the center of a charming valley. It was strongly fortified, and surrounded by thick walls, which were protected outside by a deep moat and palisades.

A thermal spring at the foot of the hill fed the moat and turned the wheels of a grist mill. The only entrance to the monastery was over a narrow drawbridge that spanned the moat at its deepest part. The multitude of visitors to the healing spring found lodgings in the little village outside the walls of the monastery; and only one hundred worshippers at a time were permitted to enter the chapel inside the gates. If the crowd gathered at the drawbridge at the hour for services exceeded that number then mass was celebrated all day long, one hundred of the faithful entering at one door, as the hundred that had worshipped passed out by the other. Day and night guards armed to the teeth patrolled the walls and the court-yard; and no visitor was allowed to enter with weapons of any sort, for enormous wealth lay heaped within the walls of the monastery. When I saw the heaps on heaps of valuables in the treasure-chamber, I no longer wondered that Nyedzviedz desired to possess it. There was a

massive altar of pure silver, the gift of King Stanislaus; golden alms basins, engraved with the name and history of the donor, Count Leszinsky; images of saints with mosaics of priceless gems; golden chalices; shrines glittering with rubies and diamonds; gemmed thuribles; antique crowns which had once adorned crania twice the size of the heads of our day; costly reliquaries; and, amid all this splendor, countless numbers of crutches and staves, the votive offerings of the afflicted who had found healing in the waters of the spring.

The crutches and staves were the first objects to attract my eye, and I said to myself: "How gladly would I add to this collection the old Turk's koltukdengenegi with all its gold, could I but find healing for my crippled leg."

When the choral began, I can't describe the feeling which took possession of me as I listened to the beautiful melody. I had no thought then for the treasures of gold and silver—no glance for anything but the image of the saint above the altar. I could not escape from the reproachful eyes it fixed on me. I felt that it was reading all the wicked thoughts in my breast. But, as I listened to the beautiful music, all the evil intentions I had brought with me to the monastery faded from my heart; and when the last sounds died away, there was not, in all the devout company, a more bitterly repentant wretch than I. When the service was concluded, the worshippers passed in front of the prior to receive his benediction. The prior was a ven-

erable saint with a flowing white beard; his countenance expressed infinite goodness and benevolence.

We had been told not to offer any gifts to the monks on entering the monastery; but to leave whatever we might think fit to bestow, on departing.

The venerable prior dispensed his blessing to all alike. He did not inquire if the recipient were a believer, or a heretic. Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, all alike, received the godly man's benediction.

I quitted the chapel wholly repentant. I had completely forgotten the errand on which I had been sent. Not once did it occur to me that I was there as a spy, to examine the walls, the mortars, to learn the strength of the garrison.

I took my place in the procession of cripples, and hobbled along with them, mumbling the prayers prescribed for us.

When we arrived at the miracle-working spring, I and my fellow-sufferers were undressed and placed on rafts in the water—rich and poor alike, no distinction was made between the magnate and the beggar.

I can't say exactly how long I remained in the water; but when I came out, the crook had left my leg, it was straight and sound as before I came into possession of the old Turk's crutch.

"Miraculum! Miraculum!" shouted the entire company; while I wept like a little child, for joy and gratitude.

With my crutch over my shoulder, instead of under it I returned to the prior, who received me with a benignant smile.

I knelt at his feet and asked him to receive my confession. I told him every thing; that I was there at the behest of the haidemaken leader to spy out the strength of the fortifications and the garrison; that the band was preparing to assault the monastery, so soon as they should hear from me; that they intended to bring with them a powerful field-gun, with which to force a breach in the walls through which the four-hundred fearless robbers would enter and overpower the soldiery. When I had concluded, and the prior had given me absolution, he said:

"Now, my son, go back to those who sent you here and tell them what you have learned. Let them come with their field-gun, and do you come with them. When you are ordered to bombard the walls, do you obey—"

"What? father;" I interrupted in astonishment. "You advise me to do that?"

"Yes. On the bombardier depends the effect of the bombardment! It rests with him to aim well, or ill! Better you at the gun than another!"

I understood the sagacious reply, and said:

"I shall take good care not to aim well, father."

"On you, my son, will it depend that the relief troops I shall send for reach here in time to save us from the robbers."

"And you may rest assured, father, that I shall know how to prolong the siege!"

As a pledge that I would keep faith with him I gave him my crutch, gratitude also prompting the gift, for,

not even a gold-filled crutch is too great a price to pay for a sound leg!

"I will keep it for you, my son," said the benevolent sage. "If you succeed in averting the danger which threatens us you shall have the crutch back, and something in addition—something of more value than gold: aid to reform. Take this image of the Holy Virgin to your wife with my blessing."

A changed man at heart, I returned to the cavern, where, however, I was forced again to tell untruths, in order to deceive the robbers. But it was for a good cause.

My comrades received me with gratulatory shouts when they saw me walking on two healthy legs. I told them I had been healed by magic—by the incantations of a witch, and they believed me! Had I told the truth, and that I had received the blessing of the prior, it would have made them suspicious.

We now held a council of war, at which I delivered my report. I knew from experience that, to gain credence for a lie, one must invest it with a modicum of truth. Therefore, I described, without deviating one iota from the truth, the treasures I had seen, and even added to them—as, for instance: I said there were barrels filled with gold and silver, which made the robbers' mouths water. Nyedzviedz was full of ambitious plans. He intended, so soon as he got money enough, to combine under his leadership all the predatory bands in the Carpathian region, and with them invade and plunder the wealthy Galician cities, castles, and monastaries. He felt confident that the common peo-

ple would be glad to aid in plundering the prelates and nobles.

I described the fortifications of Berdiczov monastery as almost impregnable, when the truth was, that I could, with the culverin, have battered down the walls the first day while the rusty old mortars would do little damage among the beleaguerers. I ascribed to the prior the strategic talents of a field-marshall. My description of the moat, with the formidable palisades concealed under the water, quite discouraged the robbers from the plan they had made to swim across it, and storm the walls.

Indeed, I told such astounding tales about the powder mines under the walls and moat, that their confidence in me became absolute when I sketched *my* plan of assault. I proposed to batter the fortifications in such a manner, that the *debris* would fall into and fill up the moat, which would enable us to cross it without injury, and enter through the breaches I had made in the walls. I won the leader's favor and approval to such an extent that he committed the entire conduct of the important expedition into my hands.

At the conclusion of the council, I asked as a special favor to be allowed to spend a day with my beloved Madus before we set out on the expedition.

Nyedzviedz at first was unwilling to consent. "I know," he said, "just how women-folk are. It is best for a soldier to have nothing to do with them. Their tears are sure to melt a soft heart."

But I persisted in my request, and at last received permission to visit the Viszpa Ogrod.

It was a beautiful autumn afternoon when I descended the steep path to the secluded valley. While yet some distance from our little cottage, I heard my Madus singing sweetly—I can hear her now, and see her as she came joyfully to meet me.

How happy she was!

The poor child believed I had come to stop, and as I did not want to cloud her joy, I put off until the moment of my departure, telling her that I was again to accompany her father on a distant expedition.

One day at least I would spend happily. So, I let my Madus tell me all that had happened in the valley during my absence; I heard also how much dried fruit, how many smoked trout, how many cheeses, she had in store for the winter; how many yards of beautiful linen she had woven from the flax she had cultivated with her own hands.

Last of all, she exhibited, with blushing cheeks, her little treasures: cunning little caps, and jackets, at sight of which my heart leapt for joy in my bosom. She confided to me in a whisper that, when Christmas should arrive, her Bethlehem crib would have received its occupant.

Oh, how gladly would I have remained with her! But it could not be. I had more ambitious plans for her. I was bent on escaping with her to the great world, where she should—as she deserved—become a fine lady.

After she had told me everything about herself, she asked me to relate what I had done while absent. When I told her how successful the expedition had

proved, I found that the Madus who tended her doves and made cheeses in the Viszpa Ogrod, was vastly different from the Madus who had once accompanied the haidemaken expeditions. She grew pale with horror when I described the slaughter of the caravan; and the occurrence which resulted in my becoming the inheritor of the old Turk's crutch, and a lame leg. She became more composed, however, when I told her about the marvelous cure at the healing spring; and quite recovered her composure when I gave her the image of the Holy Virgin the prior had sent her. Ah me! that image was her death, as well as her salvation.

The next morning I told her I had to leave her again. She sought with tears and caresses to dissuade me from going. She clasped her arms around my neck, then flung herself at my feet, and clasped my knees—she seemed unable to control her wild despair.

I have often thought since that the poor child had a presentiment she would never again behold me in this life.

I sought in vain to comfort her; in vain I assured her that I would never leave her again after I returned from this expedition, from which I hoped to secure what would enable me to establish a home for her in some large city. She was inconsolable.

She accompanied me to the entrance to the rock-corridor, and would have gone clear to the cavern, had not her father met us just as we were entering the passage. He frightened her by saying it would be unsafe to venture among the haidemaken in her condition, as all robbers entertained the superstitious be-

lief that the fourth finger from the hand of an unborn babe rendered the possessor invulnerable to bullet and sword.

Nyedzviedz would not even allow a last embrace, but thrust us roughly apart; and forced me to precede him into the corridor. I kept looking back from time to time, so long as the entrance remained in sight. My Madus stood, looking after me, in the circular opening of the rocky wall; she seemed like a saint encompassed by a halo of light, and as the corridor grew darker and more gloomy the radiant image at my back increased in brilliance until a sudden turn hid the beautiful vision from my sight.

That same evening we set out for Berdiczov—four-hundred haidemaken, with the culverin.

## CHRISTMAS.

It was early Autumn when we began the siege, which I conducted in so skillful—from my point of view!—a manner, that December found us still outside the walls of the monastery. Three times I changed the position of our assaulting forces; but took good care every time to select a point far enough from the walls to prevent our shots from damaging them to any considerable extent.

Nyedzviedz kept urging me to a nearer approach: he said we were so distant, that the cannon-balls from the fortifications had to roll over the ground to reach our lines. So, one day, after he had examined the ground, and discovered what he believed to be a more advantageous position, I was forced, in order not to

rouse his suspicions, to comply with his request. While superintending the throwing up of intrenchments the first night I managed to secrete under the earth-works a keg of powder, and in the morning I told the leader that extreme caution would be necessary, now that we were so much nearer to the fortifications, as the monks were having powder-mines laid under our breast-works. I had heard peculiar noises during the night, I told him, and, suspecting what was being done, I had scattered a few peas on the head of a drum standing on the ground. The lively dancing of the peas had convinced me that my suspicions were correct.

But the leader was incredulous. He decided to take observations for himself; and would spend the following night in the trenches, when he could also watch the result of our bombardment. This would make it impossible for me to carry out my plans for exploding the keg of powder hidden in the breast-works. But, I was not to be outdone. I happened to remember an expedient I had once employed with success, and resorted to it again: I drew the fuse through a long reed, one end of which I thrust into the keg.

I had to be very cautious; for Nyedzviedz had a nose that could smell a match cord at long range; but with the fuse inside the reed, I could prevent the fumes from getting into the range of his olfactor.

The powder exploded at the right moment, just when the leader was bending eagerly over the breast-work to peer after a bomb. After the smoke and dust cleared away, I drew him from under the heap of earth,

from which only his legs protruded. He had not been injured in the least, but all desire to assault the enemy at so close a range had fled, and I was allowed to return to our former position, on the brow of a hill, a considerable distance farther from the fortifications.

I consoled the dissatisfied haidemaken with the assurance that, when the real cold weather of winter should set in, the moat would freeze over; then it would be an easy matter to storm the walls at close range. I did not think it necessary to tell them that the warm spring would prevent the water in the moat from freezing. In the meantime came Christmas—an anxiously longed-for day in many respects. With the dawn of Christmas morning came a furious snow-storm, the north wind flinging down on us such masses of flakes that it was impossible to see ten steps away.

It was just the sort of weather I had calculated on. The bombardment had to cease, as the monastery was completely hidden from view behind the veil of snow. The haidemaken retired to their tents, and amused themselves, gaming with dice and cards, for what stakes do you imagine? They had no money, remember! Why, the winner paid, and the loser received, a box on the ear! I hadn't any fondness for the game myself; but my comrades seemed to enjoy it hugely.

While gaming, drinking, cursing, were going on in the other tents, I sat in my own, alone, and silent, pondering over my past years. I recalled the different anniversaries of the blessed day, beginning with the first I could remember when, held in my mother's arms, I removed from the Christmas-tree my first

ginger-bread doll, which I was loath to eat because of its beautiful golden hue.

Then, my thoughts turned to the humble cot in the Viszpa Ogrod; and I wondered, with a strange trembling in my bosom, if the little Bethlehem crib, my Madus had prepared for the reception of a precious occupant, now held its treasure.

The monastery bells were ringing for the Christmas service; on the bastion a long procession of monks with innumerable lamps was moving toward the chapel.

The wind was driving the clouds across the sky, and hundreds of witch-forms rioted above the camp, in the faint light which came from a mist-veiled moon.

The snow-fall had ceased; only the wind, which was scattering the storm-clouds, still swept with unabated vigor across the plain, packing the fine snow more compactly together.

Suddenly, amid the noise of carousing and shouting which came from the neighboring tents, I heard a sound that made me drop quickly to my knees, and lay my ear close to the ground. At last! At last! They were coming! I could hear distinctly the hoof-beats, when they crossed the rocky road from which the wind had swept the snow. Then, the sound ceased—they were come to the plain where the snow muffled the noise of the hoofs. Duke Visznovieczky's dragoons were approaching at a brisk trot to the assistance of Berdiczov monastery.

I did not wait for them to come up. In the dark all cows are black! I said to myself: "It will be useless

to try to convince the dragoon who raises his sword against me that I am this one, and not the other one! So I wrapped myself in my mantle, slipped from the tent, and ran fleetly toward the monastery.

When I paused to look back, after the relief troop had begun the attack on the robber camp, I saw the witch-dance I had seen earlier, it had descended to the earth, and with it was joined a tumult of demons; of black forms, and white, darting hither and thither; of furious sword cuts; frenzied cries; mad flight, and swift pursuit!

The early morning assault was successful. The dragoons routed the haidemaken without a shot. What became of my comrades I cannot say, for I continued on my way to the monastery, where I shouted myself hoarse before the draw-bridge was lowered to admit me.

Early mass had just been concluded. The monks with their tall candlesticks, chanting a psalm of praise, led the procession returning from the chapel; the cripples hobbling in the rear, hummed the antiphony. But, *hei*! didn't the devout company break ranks quickly when I appeared before them with the announcement:

"Duke Visznovieczky's dragoons are come, and have attacked the haidemaken camp!"

The psalm-singing ceased at once; and, instead, everybody was shouting: "To arms! To arms!"

Even the canopy-bearers left the prior in the middle of the court-yard, and ran to fetch their arms; while

the cripples hopped about on one leg and brandished their crutches and staves.

By this time we could see that the beleaguerers were fleeing before the dragoons in every direction. The valiant burgers who, at the beginning of the siege, had taken refuge in the monastery, could now no longer repress their heroic feelings. Seizing whatever would serve as a weapon, the brave fellows dashed across the draw-bridge and sped toward the field of battle; the reverend fathers followed at a more dignified pace; the cripples brought up the rear, and assisted the worthy burgers to complete the work of destruction begun by the dragoons, by cutting off the feet of those haidemaken who had already been decapitated.

Whether Nyedzviedz had succeeded in escaping the fate of many of his comrades, I could not learn then; nor did I care! I was too thankful that I had been spared from destruction and delivered from the clutch of the robber-band. Therewith ended my career as a haidemak.

The prisoner here paused in his confession, feeling that he, as well as the court, needed a rest.

"I am inclined to believe," observed the prince, "that the accused rehabilitated himself through his valiant act. So much as he sinned, so much he made good! He was healed by a miracle of God; therefore, it behooves us earthly judges to consider well before we pass sentence where the Heavenly Judge granted absolution."

To this the chair, with obvious irritation, made

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reply: "If your highness intends to permit this malefactor to extenuate, in a like manner, all the rest of his misdeeds, when he gets to the end of the list we shall feel that he deserves canonization instead of punishment."

# PART III.

## IN THE SERVICE OF THE DUKE.

## CHAPTER I.

### MALACHI.

The next day the prisoner continued his confession:

My experience at Berdiczov monastery, my deliverance from destruction, as well as the miraculous restoration of my crippled limb, decided me to adopt the faith of the holy brotherhood.

Their solemn ceremonies, their elevating devotions, their piety, made a deep impression on me; but the most comforting to me of all their rites was that of the confessional.

It was such a comfort to unbosom myself to one in whom I could trust implicitly; to confide in him all the secrets that tortured my dreams by night, and my thoughts by day. And then, to receive absolution—to get back, as it were, the bond I had given to Satan!

One day was not long enough for all I had to tell. I could have spent every day of the week in the confessional, pouring into the ear of the good Father Agapitus the sins which burdened my conscience. And

one day I confessed, too, that I was becoming weary of the life in the monastery, where there was nothing to do but tend to the sick all day long; and that I wanted to go back to the world—if not to my former sinful life.

After I had confessed, I ventured to ask the worthy father to recommend me to some Polish noble, with whom I should have little work and much amusement. There were many such places, I said, where the services of a man of my stamp were required.

"My dear son," returned the worthy father, "I cannot recommend you to a Christian man of the world, for, although I could tell him that you are a pious confrater *now*, I could not say that you have always been honest. I know just the contrary, and I cannot give false witness. But I will do what I can for you. Here is the crutch you left with us—the gold is still in it. Take it, garb yourself in beggar raiment, and limp to Lemberg, where lives a Master Malachi in the Jewish quarter of the city. You need only to inquire for him, and you will be directed to his house. He is a wicked man, in league with Satan. He deserves to have been sent to the scaffold long ago—and he will get there should the Inquisition be established. Malachi is the man for your needs. Tell him what you require, he will understand you—especially if you tell him what your crutch contains!

I could understand clearly that a pious man like Father Agapitus could do nothing for me—so notorious a sinner! He could not give me a letter of recommendation, with false dates; it was enough if he

directed me where to find an accomplished counterfeiter, who could supply my wants. So, I kissed his hand in gratitude; bade him farewell, and, with my crutch under my shoulder, set out for Lemberg, begging my way so that no one should suspect that I carried in my crutch the wherewith to pay for food and lodging.

When I arrived in Lemberg I repaired at once to the Jews' quarter, where the streets are so narrow two wagons cannot pass one another. Directly I entered the principal thoroughfare, which seemed a veritable rag-fair from one end to the other, I was surrounded by a swarm of noisy children.

I took from my pocket a denarius, held it up before them, and said I would give it to the lad who would conduct me to the house of Malachi, whereupon the youngsters began to quarrel as to which of them should become the possessor of the coin. The largest scamp among them, who succeeded by force of his superior size and strength to vanquish his fellows, offered himself as guide.

He led me a pretty chase, through numerous by-ways and alleys, where there was hardly room for two persons to pass, to a shop in front of which was sitting an aged dame, with her cap drawn down to her eyebrows.

Said my guide, after I had placed the denarius in his hand:

"This woman knows where Malachi lives—she will tell you;" and before I could stop him, the little rascal

was off down the street as fast as his legs could carry him.

I turned to the crone, who kept nodding her old head as if she were assenting to anything I might say to her, took from my pocket a *Marien-groschen,* and holding it toward her, said:

"Here, mother, this pretty coin shall be yours if you will direct me to Malachi's house."

She nodded—as much as to say "very good;" rose from her chair, shuffled into the shop, where she filled a small vial with red Polish brandy. This she handed to me with one hand, at the same time extending the other for the money.

"I don't wan't brandy—I want to know where Malachi lives?" I shouted at the top of my voice.

The dame trotted back into the shop and brought a bottle of green Russian brandy.

The little scamp had left me to deal with a deaf woman! When I bawled into her ear for the third time the name of Malachi, she fetched from the shop a packet of insect powder which she offered in exchange for the *Marien-groschen.*

Then I bethought me of an expedient which is usually successful in like cases: I took from my pocket a crown and held it toward the dame. This cure for deafness proved effective.

"Oh, you want to find Malachi?" she said in a cautious whisper, nodding understandingly. "Follow me."

She closed and locked the shop-door, opened a little gate at the corner of the house, led me across a vege-

table garden hung with soiled clothes; across a second; thence through a narrow passage, between two old buildings, into a wood-shed; from there into a cellar; then over a swinging bridge across an ill-smelling canal; and, lastly, through a long, seemingly interminable corridor, at the end of which she knocked with her staff at a wooden door, at the same time whispering in my ear, and taking the crown from my hand:

"I can't tell you where Malachi lives; but I have brought you to the thaumaturgus, who knows everything; he will tell you where to find Malachi."

The door opened, and I saw before me a venerable man with silvery hair and beard. He was blind. His tall form was enveloped in a black silk robe girt about the waist by an oriental sash. From his garb, I concluded that a coin of greater value would be necessary to procure the information I desired.

"Are you the man who knows everything?" I inquired.

The old gentleman was not in the least chary of words. With great readiness he declared that he understood the language of the birds of the air; the speech of the beasts of the field; that he could converse with dragons; could discover subterranean springs; could tell any man whether or no he was the son of his father; could even understand the tongue in which demons spake—"

"But," I interrupted, "I don't want to know any of these things. If you will tell me where Malachi lives, I will pay for the information."

"Ah, my son!" he responded, turning his sightless

eyes heavenward; "that is a difficult question to answer. There are in this world as many Malachis as there are flowers in the field, and stars in the sky. There are seventy-seven in this very city; a Malachi Mizraim; a Malachi Meschugge; a Malachi Choschen; Malachi Pinkas; Malachi Honnowas—How do I know which Malachi you want?"

"I want the one who is a—counterfeiter," I answered, with some hesitation.

"Ah, my son!" again ejaculated the venerable sage, shaking his head sadly, "how sorry I am to hear that you are on such evil ways! All the Malachis with whom I have to do are honest, God-fearing men."

I saw plainly that I should have to assist the old gentleman's memory; I pressed a gold coin into his palm. He turned it over and over in his fingers; tested it in various ways; and, after convincing himself that it was genuine, he delivered this apothegmatic solution of the riddle:

"My son, he whom you seek, I cannot find. I have never seen him—I am blind. We will consult the Miracle."

He stepped back into the room, to the table, where he groped about with his hands among the different objects, until he found a long steel needle. This he thrust between the leaves of a heavy book lying on the table, opened it, and placing his forefinger at the point of the needle, where it rested on the page, said, in a prophetic tone:

"He whom the Miracle designates is Ben Malachi

Peixoto, the Portuguese—not I, but the Miracle says so."

"And where shall I find this Portuguese?" I asked.

"When you go from the door of my dwelling, you will find his directly opposite. Knock twice, then once, then twice again, and you will be admitted. And now, my son, go your way in peace!"

A stocky youth, with a candle, conducted me down a dark stairway, opened the door, and I found myself in the same street from which I had started on my quest. Malachi's house was the first one on the corner. I had been led a tramp, for half a day, hither and thither, up and down, through the entire Ghetto, to reach the first house in it!

I knocked on the door as I had been directed; it was opened by a quince-colored lad. I cannot say for certain whether it was a lad or a lass, I think, though, it was a lad. I could not understand the language he spoke—indeed, I don't believe it was a language at all! He conducted me up a creaking staircase, into a darkened room, in the corner of which crouched a human form with its back to the door. He did not turn at my entrance, but kept his face turned from me all the time I was in the room.

In front of him was a mirror in which he could see my reflection. The fleeting glimpse I caught of his face in the glass, told me that the mysterious creature had no beard; his face was quite smooth, which I believe is the fashion among Portuguese Jews; it had been embrocated with orpiment, which eats off the hair

of the beard—a Mosaic law prohibiting the use of metal to remove hair from the face.

"Is Malachi at home?" I inquired.

"Malachi is at home; what do you want of him?"

The man spoke in the third person, so that I could not have sworn that he to whom I addressed my inquiries was Malachi or not.

"I will tell you my errand as briefly as possible," said I. "I want to secure a position in the household of Duke Visznovieczky, and require a patent of nobility to certify to my noble birth. I also want an academic testimonial; a certificate of baptism and confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church; and, lastly, I want a letter of recommendation from some grand duke or other, which testifies to my erudition, and skill in all the sciences, as well as to my excellent character. Of course I don't expect you to furnish me with all these documents for nothing. I am willing to pay your price for them. How much do you ask?"

The man replied to my reflection in the mirror: "Malachi's answer to your insolent request is: You have applied to the wrong person. Malachi does not meddle with such criminal doings. Moreover, Malachi has nothing whatever to do with ragged beggars like yourself. If you desire to become such a knight as you describe, and have the money to pay for the transformation, go to Malachi's cousin, Malchus, the tailor, who sells gentlemen's clothing. He lives on the corner of Bethel street, beside the fountain. From him you can buy all manner of fine raiment. Malchus will transform you to a noble knight—if you have the

money to pay for it. And now be gone from here, and don't come back again, for Malachi is an honest man whose lips do not utter falsehoods; his fingers have never been stained with the ink of forgery."

Firmly believing that he was the Malachi I sought, I departed from his house with a disappointed heart, and betook myself to Bethel street, to the house beside the fountain, where I found Malchus the tailor. I would at least exchange my beggar's garb for the raiment of a gentleman.

"How glad I am to see your lordship again!" exclaimed the little man, as I stepped into his door. "May I become as the dust of the street, if it doesn't seem a hundred years since I saw you last! But, does your lordship imagine I could fail to recognize the noble knight Zdenko Kochanovszki, who, in fulfillment of a vow, journeyed on foot, and garbed as a pilgrim, to Jerusalem and back? Have not I, Malchus the tailor, eyes to see? I'll wager my head against a button, that nobody but myself would recognize your lordship in those ragged garments. Could the beautiful Persida, from whom your lordship received the magnificent wreath at the tournament, see you now, she would say: 'Give this ragged beggar a penny, and drive him away.' She is a duchess now, the wife of the powerful Duke Visznovieczki. But *I* have not forgotten your lordship; I still have the clothes your lordship left in pledge with me—also the embroidered leather-belt with the bag containing the documents. I kept them all, safely concealed, for I knew your lordship, the

brave and noble Zdenko Kochanovszki, would return from the holy land and redeem his pledge."

I saw at once that I should have to accept the personality thrust upon me by the loquacious little tailor, and call myself Zdenko Kochanovszki; and when I found how admirably the puissant knight's cast-off garments fitted me, I no longer hesiated to take possession of his name also.

And that is how I became Zdenko Kochanovszki. When I was completely garbed—and a stately *mazar*, I looked in the knight's habiliments!—I asked Malchus what was to pay.

"Why, surely your lordship remembers the sum I advanced on the clothes? Of course, I did not count in the loan the jeweled clasps your lordship desired to be sent to the beautiful Persida; so you owe me only a round hundred ducats—"

"A hundred ducats?" I repeated in consternation. "Why there isn't in all Poland a waywode who can boast of so costly a suit of clothes."

Malchus smiled slyly: "That is very true, my lord, and there is not in all Poland a magnate who can boast of more valuable documents than those in the bag attached to your lordship's leather-belt. When your lordship left them with me and charged me to care for them as for the apple of my eye, I knew they must be of great importance. So I have kept them safely concealed all these years. I don't know what the papers contain as I can read only what I write with my own hand. I don't understand Latin, or Greek; and I don't know how to read from left to right; conse-

quently your lordship may believe me when I say I have not read the papers. Your lordship will find everything in the bag just as when it was placed in my hands for safe keeping."

I opened the bag, and, on examining the documents, found to my surprise and delight that they were just what I wanted. There was a patent of nobility, with a Turk's head in the crest—(concerning the Turk's head I might justly have appropriated it for my own escutcheon, only I had not come into possession of it on the battlefield!) There was also an academic certificate, from the Rector of Sarbonne, with the baccalaureate degree; also certificates of baptism and confirmation, signed by the bishop of Cracow; a testimonial of valor from the imperial commander-in-chief, Montecucculi; and a pardon from the patriarch of Jerusalem—such as are bestowed on pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre—all of which were the property of Zdenko Kochanovszki—who I was!

Malchus continued to smile slyly while I was examining the documents, and when I had read the last one he said:

"Doesn't your lordship think these handsome clothes are worth one hundred ducats?"

I gave him a hearty slap on the back; then counted out a "round hundred ducats." The clothes were not worth one-tenth that sum, but I was quite satisfied with my purchase.

I was now fully equipped for my entrance to the ducal palace; as Zdenko Kochanovszki I might without hesitation seek admittance anywhere.

He to whom the name rightly belonged had disappeared eight years before, and had most likely lost his life in the Holy Land, or in the battle with the infidels in Hungary. Whoever still remembered the beardless youth, would not wonder at the great change eight years of hardship and danger had made in him; and would expect to find the man a different looking person from the boy. As for my looks—I doubt if my own mother would have recognized me.

The duke was an old man, of a girth so enormous that he was obliged to wear a broad surcingle as support to his rotund paunch. His hair and beard were gray on the right side, but black on the left, which gave him a very peculiar appearance.

When I presented myself before him, he seized both my hands, and exclaimed:

"What! Zdenko Kochanovszki back again? The devil! What a man you are grown! Do you remember what we did at parting?"

I was confused for a moment: how was I to remember what I had never known? However, I had to reply, so I stammered what I thought the most probable:

"We drank to each other, your grace."

"By heaven, you are right, lad! That is what we did! But, do you also remember our wager?"

I ventured another guess, and answered:

"Each wagered he could drink the other under the table."

"Ha, ha, ha! Right—right!" shouted his grace, embracing and kissing me. "That's what we wagered—

and the devil fly away with me if I don't match you again this very moment! Ho, there, fetch the bratina."

The bratina is a huge golden beaker that holds two quarts. This was brought to me, filled with Hegyaljaner wine.

Now, I had fasted for many hours, and was both hungry and thirsty, so that it did not require much of an effort on my part to empty the bratina at a draught —to the supernaculum!

"The devil fetch me!" roared the jovial duke. "If I had not recognized you already, I should know you now!"

I had no difficulty drinking his grace under the table; and from that hour I became an important member of his household.

## CHAPTER II.

### PERSIDA.

"*Crimen falsi,*" dictated the chair to the notary.

"But"— the prince made haste to add—"But, *immediatum,* not *spontaneum.* The accused was led to the indirect committal of the act by the instructions of Father Agapitus; the real criminal is a Jew—it is he who deserves the stake. Therefore, the prisoner's transgression may be remitted."

"If this continues," grumblingly commented the chair, "the prisoner will surely talk himself out of every one of his crimes. Well"— addressing himself to the accused—"I don't know what to call you, but for the time being Zdenko Kochanovszki, continue."

Under that name, your honor, resumed Hugo, I lived the most memorable days of my life. I was treated by the duke as a good comrade and familiar friend. We hunted together for days in the ducal forests slaying the wild bulls and bears by the hundreds; and when we returned to the palace the merry-making began. There would be feasting and drinking; the most enchanting music by a band of Bohemian players; the court-fools would amuse us with all sorts of buffoonery; and when any of the jovial company succumbed to the beaker and tumbled under the table the attendants carried them to bed. Not infrequently it happened that his grace and myself would

be the only two left at the table—we being able to stand more than the others.

At times, too, I would entertain the company by relating the most wonderful tales of my pilgrimage, which were listened to with close attention.

In all this time I had not seen a single woman about the palace.

The grand-duchess was absent on a pilgrimage to Berdiczov, in fulfillment of a vow. I learned from one of the guests that the duke's marriage had not been blessed with an heir, and this was why the duchess had undertaken the devout journey. As she knew she should be absent several weeks, she took with her all the women servants, as well as her ladies-in-waiting—from which I guessed the fair Persida to be a shrewd, as well as a beautiful woman.

I waited her grace's return with no little apprehension, for, with the exception of the grand duke himself, every one about the palace knew that Zdenko Kochanovszki had been a devoted admirer of the lady before her marriage. Indeed, it was said that her marriage to the rich old duke had sent the youthful Zdenko on his pilgrimage.

That all this was unknown to his grace was certain, else the reception accorded to me, whom he believed to be his former boon companion, would not have been so cordial.

There would be some sport when the lady returned home.

Would she, too, see in me her quondam admirer? What would happen to me if the eyes of a loving

woman should prove more keen than those of her husband? What would be the result if she saw through my masquerade? If she should say: "Away with this rogue—he is a deceiver! *I* know what dwells in the eyes of the true Zdenko, for I have looked into them. These are not Zdenko's eyes."

And again: what would happen if she should believe me to be her one-time lover? and question me as her husband had done: "Do you remember the promise we gave to each other?" And, suppose I should be as lucky in guessing the reply as before!

* * * * * * *

The duke spoke boastfully of his dragoon's victory over the haidemaken before the walls of Berdiczov monastery. The robbers had been mowed down like grain; only the leader and a few of his men had escaped by the skin of their teeth; their field-gun had been captured and the gunner hanged on one of the tallest trees—your honors may guess that I took good care not to deny this statement!

I praised the duke's heroism, and listened attentively to his tales about the terrible haidemaken, as if I had never heard of them before.

At last, one fine day, the pilgrims returned from Berdiczov; and the joyous sound of women's voices was heard in the palace. Master and man hastened to welcome the fair ones. I alone had no one to greet.

I was very curious to see what manner of woman the beautiful Persida might be—she for whose sake the owner of my name had gone out into the wide world.

The duke hastened to assist her from the carriage on the arrival of the caravan. She was very graceful—tall, with a pale face, large, dark languishing eyes, full red lips, and coal black hair.

When her spouse pressed his moist moustache to her lips, she made a grimace. He was overjoyed at her return. The duke's guests and attendants welcomed the returned duchess, each in their own fashion; the former pressed their lips to her hand; the latter kissed the hem of her robe. I did not want my first meeting with her grace to take place in the presence of the entire household; but the duke called me from the hall, where I had withdrawn, and said:

"See here, my love, who is this? Look at him, and tell me if you recognize the lad?"

I was afraid to meet the glance which scrutinized my features—I felt that I should be compelled to blurt out:

"I am Baran, gunner of the haidemaken."

"You don't recognize him, do you?" again said the duke. "I knew you wouldn't. 'Tis our long absent comrade Zdenko Kochanovszki."

For one single instant I saw into that woman's soul. At mention of my name, a sudden light leapt into her eyes—a world of passion flamed for one brief instant.

Her husband had not seen it, only I. Then the beautiful eyes became cold again, and indifferent, and the queenly head was gravely bent in recognition of an old acquaintance, the slender fingers were extended for the formal kiss of greeting.

She did not vouchsafe another glance toward me,

but turned toward the duke, laid her hand on his arm, and said with sudden friendliness:

"*Comment vous portez-vous, mon petit drôle?*" Although her grace took no further notice of me, I saw my way clear for the future.

With the return of the duchess the household regulations underwent a complete change. The noisy tipplers received their *congé;* the nightly carousals came to an end. Quite a different mode of life had been prescribed by the prior of the monastery for the ducal pair, if they wished his blessing to have the desired effect. All fast days were to be strictly observed; they might eat only sparingly of the plainest food—only of those dishes which conduce to strength: snails, frogs, and those vegetables which grow under ground.

This sort of diet, as you may guess, was not suited to the palates of the duke's guests. One after another took his departure, until none remained but myself; and I had become indispensable to his grace, because of my ability to amuse him with adventurous tales.

Every evening the duchess would send for me to read aloud in a religious book, about saints, until the duke would become sleepy. Her grace continued to treat me with extreme reserve; she never lifted her eyes to mine when she spoke to me, but always kept them lowered, as if she were addressing her remarks to my boots.

She appeared to be extraordinarily pious; she would repeat a long prayer before and at the end of every meal. She never called me by name—always "Sir." Indeed, the only time she unbent from her frigid re-

serve, was, when she patted her husband's fat, bearded cheek, or pulled his moustache, to restore him to a good humor; but these occasions were rare.

Before the duke retired for the night, the duchess prepared with her own fair hands his slumber draught, the recipe for which she had received from the prior of Berdiczov monastery. It was composed of all sorts of costly spices—an enumeration of which I may repeat later, should I take up the trade of concocting various potations, the efficacy of which may not be doubted.

The chief ingredient of the duke's sleeping potion was hot, red wine; and he was wont to smack his lips and exclaim after he had emptied the glass:

"Ah!—my love, that has quite rejuvenated me." He would spring lightly as a youth from his arm-chair, take his wife's hand, and gallantly conduct her to their private chambers, leaving me to the solitary perusal of the pious volume—to learn what had happened to St. Genevieve, when Attila's Huns besieged Paris.

One evening we were engaged as usual with our instructive reading. The duke and his wife were seated in front of the fire-place; I, as always, occupied a chair at the table on which rested the ponderous "History of the Saints and Martyrs." I had been reading for an hour and more, how St. Genevieve had relieved Paris a second time from famine, when the duke suddenly interrupted to say he was so thirsty he must beg that his nightly potion be given to him at once. His wife prepared it for him; but, instead of rising to retire to his own rooms as usual, after he had emptied

the glass, he settled himself back in his chair, clasped his hands over his paunch, and in a few minutes his powerful snoring again interrupted the reading.

The duchess looked at him for several moments with an indescribable expression on her lovely face—a mixture of loathing, rage, and contempt; then, she sprang to her feet, came swiftly toward the table where I was sitting, and gave it so vigorous a thrust with her foot that it toppled over and fell, together with the Saints and Martyrs, to the floor with a loud noise. His grace did not stir; his snores continued with unabated vigor.

Before I had recovered from my astonishment at her grace's behavior, she seated herself on my knee and flung her arms around my neck:

"So you have come back to me, Zdenko? Tell me, do you still love me?" she asked in a passionate whisper, at the same time making it impossible for me to reply—

"Stop!" here interrupted the chair: "I don't quite understand how that could be?"

"I do," promptly, and succinctly interposed the prince. "Continue, prisoner, what happened next?"

I hardly know how to tell it, your highness. It was like a dream of paradise! I knew that every kiss I received and returned was deceit, robbery, sacrilege; I knew I was cheating the house which sheltered me; the master of the house who fed me; the unknown man whose name I bore—the woman—God—the devil—all—all. And yet, were you to ask me what I should do were I to be placed in the same situation again, I

should reply: "Just what I did then—and if it cost me my life!"

"Hardened reprobate!" exclaimed the chair in a tone of reprimand. Then he dictated to the notary: "*Adulterium cum stellionatum*—"

"But," hastily interposed the prince, "he did not begin it. In this case, as in that of Father Adam: the woman was to blame. The prisoner will continue."

I know it was a great crime—I know it very well, and it oppresses my soul to this day, although I have received absolution for it. In that moment of oblivion to all things earthly, the lovely Persida whispered in my ear:

"Zdenko, if you could journey to the Holy Land for love of me you could also endure a season of purgatory for my sake, could you not?"

Without stopping to consider, I answered:

"Certainly I could!"

"Very well, then, do not confess this sin which is half mine. Do not confide it to priest, or saint, for no matter to whom you might confess, misfortune would come to me as well as to you."

I promised not to confess the sin; but I went about with it weighting my soul, much as a wounded stag roams the forest with a dart in his vitals.

The old duke at last became so devout that he compelled every member of his household to repair to the confessional in his private chapel, every fast day. There was nothing to be seen of the priest who received the penitents, but his hand, in which he held a

long ivory wand with which he would touch the penitent as a sign that absolution had been granted.

The duke confessed first; after him the duchess; then I, the house-friend, and major-domo of the ducal household. When my turn came, I took my place before the lattice and said to the confessor: "Father, will you give me your word of honor that you will never tell what I confess to you?"

"Don't ask such silly questions, my son," he replied. "Don't you know that the secrets of the confessional are inviolably sacred?"

"But, suppose you should tell them sometime?" I persisted.

"Then I should be burned at the stake."

"Has it never happened that a priest betrayed the secrets confided to him in the confessional?" I asked again.

"Such a case is not on record, my son. Not even the confession of a murderer may be revealed, though the priest knows that an innocent man will be hanged for the crime. He dare not speak to prevent the law from committing another murder. On the other hand, many a priest has suffered martyrdom rather than betray the secrets confided to him. An illustrious example is Saint Nepomuck, of whom I dare say you have heard?"

"Yes, I have read about John Nepomucene; but are you a saint of that order?"

"The vows I have taken, my son, are the same he took."

"That is not enough, father; you must swear to me that you will never reveal what I tell you."

And his reverence had to yield to my importunate request before I would make my confession to him. After he had solemnly sworn never to reveal what I should tell him, I made a clean breast of everything—and a rare list it was I can tell you!

At the last transgression, however, I made a pause. I remembered what Persida had said to me. And yet, the sin I shared with her was the very one that most oppressed my soul.

The father noticed my hesitation, and said:

"My son, you are keeping back something. You have not told me everything. It is not likely that a stately young gentleman like yourself lives only on caraway-soup! There are many handsome women in this city; every one of them confesses her foibles—you, surely, are not the only saint about here! Remember, if you withhold but a single transgression, your tortures in purgatory will be the same as for nine-hundred and ninety-nine."

The reverend father continued to threaten me with purgatorial fires, until at last I confided in him the secret which was only half mine. I had no sooner done so than I regretted it; I would have given anything could I have recalled my words—nay, I would willingly have journeyed straightway to purgatory, as I had told Persida I would, rather than betray the secret we shared together. But the secrets of a sinful love have wings—they will escape somehow.

When I bent forward to receive the reverend father's

benediction, he gave me such a thump on the head with his wand that the spot remained sore to the touch for several days.

"He absolves one with a will, and no mistake!" I said to myself as I rose to go my way. It occurred to me for an instant, that it would be exceedingly comical if, instead of a priest, it had been the duke who received my confession. I turned to look toward his grace's arm-chair, and was relieved to see that his burly form occupied it, and that he was wrapped in devout slumber.

## THE IRON NECKLACE.

Freed from the burden of my transgressions, I proceeded to do what is usually done by the prodigal sons who have been relieved of their old debts—I set about at once to make new ones.

I looked forward with impatience for evening to arrive, for the hour of instructive reading in the book of Saints and Martyrs.

On this particular evening the duke was even more friendly toward me than usual; he jested with me, and frequently compelled me to exchange glasses with him as a sign of his cordial friendship.

When the hour arrived for the duchess to prepare the "rejuvenating sleeping potion," his grace became actually boisterous; his fat face grew crimson, his rotund paunch shook like jelly, with his incessant laughter.

"See here, comrade," he exclaimed, taking from his wife's hand the goblet in which the hot, spiced wine

was steaming, "this is a drink of paradise! When I have emptied it into my stomach, I fly direct to paradise—not the one described by our holy men, where all the men are old, and all the women pious; where there is neither eating nor drinking and where there are no amusements save harp-playing and psalm singing—no, I fly straightway to the improved paradise of the Mohammedans, where there is wine to drink and women to admire. There an enchanting Greek *Hetäre* offers you the wine of Cyprus; the Roman bacchante offers Falernian wine; the Spanish donna serves Maderia; the Lesbian siren gives you nectar; the Persian bayadere brings Shiraz; the Wallachian fairy, Tokay; and the negress Abelera dips up sparkling Bordeaux in the hollow of her dusky palm and holds it to your lips—each more beautiful than the other, until at last you cannot decide which of the wines is the most delicious. That is *I* cannot, for you have not yet made the journey. But you shall; for are not we good comrades—you and I? Is it not meet that I should let my heart's brother enjoy paradisal delights with me? To be sure it is! Very good! You shall go in my stead this very evening to Mohammed's paradise—but only this once, mind you! Here, take the glass, empty it to the dregs!" I was exceedingly embarrassed; I looked questioningly toward the duchess, who was seated on the arm of her husband's chair. He could not see her nod her head as if to say, "Do as you are bid."

I took the goblet and emptied it to the dregs. Almost immediately I was overcome by a languor that

seemed to transform my material body to vapor. I rose from the earth to the clouds which assumed the most fantastic shapes; on and on the breeze wafted me; over enchanting regions, amid talking trees and singing fruits; across a sea of radiant light swept by waves of harmony—amid music, and color, and perfumes, the quintessence of sweetness, amid gorgeous flames which became forms of transcendent loveliness: Delilah; Bathsheba; Salome; Laïs; Aspasia; Cleopatra; Semiramis; Circe; and the dusky Atalanta. The seductive forms gathered around me; they pressed toward me, smiling alluringly. They thrust on to every one of my fingers rings that glittered with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, until my hands became so heavy I could not lift them. Their embraces strangled me; their kisses burned on my face and neck like fire; the dusky Atalanta's coral lips drew the blood from my veins—

"Are you never going to waken from your satanic dream?" impatiently interrupted the chair.

"Let him dream—it is rather pleasant," interposed the prince; but Hugo said:

"I am awake. The place in which I found myself, when I opened my eyes, was not Mohammed's paradise, but an underground dungeon, the walls of which were dripping with moisture. The flickering light of a small lamp faintly illumined the narrow cell; and the rings which weighted my hands were heavy iron chains that creaked and clinked every movement I made. The kisses which burned on my face and neck were not from the lips of Delilah, Circe, and the rest; but from

those horrible hundred-legged creatures, scolopendra, which covered my body; and the dusky Atalanta, who drew the blood from my neck, was nothing less than a hideous vampyre. The embraces which strangled me were not from the white arms of enchantresses, but from an iron band two inches thick and three fingers wide, fastened about my neck, and secured to a ring in the wall by a chain, that was only long enough to allow me to reach and convey to my mouth the mouldy bread and jug of water placed by my side—"

"Served you right, you godless miscreant!" interpolated the chair in a severe tone. "You got your just deserts at last!"

At first—continued the prisoner—I consoled myself with the foolish thought that I was still under the influence of the sleeping potion. I remembered that those persons who eat the flesh of sharks are said to have such dreams: delightful visions at first, followed by the tortures of martyrdom.

But the iron neck-band was too painful a reality for me to remain long in doubt as to whether I was awake, or dreaming. The cold, hard, heavy ring betrothed me to death!

How long a time I passed in thinking over what had happened I can't say; there was no night, no day, in that dungeon; nor was I told by sleep and hunger when it was midnight or noon.

The lamp in my cell was a perpetual one, for the oil did not grow less; it was there, doubtless, to reveal to me all the horrors of my surroundings. Reptiles, all manner of creeping and crawling creatures moved

over the stone floor and walls; vampyres hung in rows from the ceiling, watching me with their garnet eyes, ready to flash down on me the moment I lost consciousness in sleep.

At last a sound roused me from the stupor into which I had fallen; a key turned in the lock, the iron door opened, and a tall man, whose face was hidden by a capuchin, entered, with a jug of water and a loaf of bread.

"Well, my lad," he exclaimed, on seeing that I had not touched the bread or the water by my side. "Do you propose to starve yourself?"

His voice sounded strangely familiar; I did not have to trouble my brain guessing where I had heard it before; he pushed back his capuchin, and I recognized the haidemaken priest who had performed the ceremony of confirmation over me in the cavern.

"You are the haidemaken pater?" I whispered hoarsely, not trusting myself to speak aloud.

"Then you recognize me, do you?" he returned, laughing. "I had an idea you would deny all knowledge of our former comradeship."

"Are you the gaoler here?" I asked.

"The gaoler?" he repeated, laughing again. "Not by a good deal! I am the court-confessor!" He sat down on the stone seat to which I was chained, and continued: "I dare say you are curious to learn how I come to be here? Well, when the duke's dragoons attacked the haidemaken at Berdiczov, I hastily donned my chasuble and capuchin, trusting to the vestments to save my life, which they did; but I was taken pris-

oner and brought to the duke. I could not deny that I was a haidemak, but his grace evidently had use for a person like myself, for he said to me: "You deserve to be hanged, reverend father, but I will spare your life on condition that you accept a proposition I shall offer you: I want you to act the part of court-confessor for a season, to receive the confessions of those persons I shall send to you. I suspect my wife of infidelity, but cannot find out who is the partner of her guilt. They both confess to the court-chaplain I have no doubt, but he is an honest old saint who would let himself be torn to pieces rather than betray the secrets confided to him in the confessional. Now, you are of a different pattern; it will not matter to you if the fires of purgatory are heated a few degrees hotter for your purification. If you don't accept my conditions you will have the opportunity at once of testing the temperature of purgatory; if you accept you shall have a respite. What do you say? Will you become my court-confessor?"

"You may believe, lad, that I would have acceded to a much more difficult proposition in order to save my neck from the gallows; so I became confessor to the ducal household. When I saw you coming toward the confessional I recognized you at once, and guessed that you would have some pretty sins to get rid of. I was not surprised when you told me of your sinful dalliance with the beautiful young duchess; and quite envied your good fortune. I said to myself, 'I will not betray the lad; but make him do penance for the sin,' so I ordered you to put seven dried peas in each

shoe and journey on foot to the shrine of the Holy Virgin at Berdiczov. Had you been content to do as I bade you, you would not be here now; but you began to haggle with me about the peas—you urged me to let you boil them before you put them into your shoes; and, to win my indulgence, you told me of the good turn you had done the monks of Berdiczov by betraying the haidemaken into the hands of the duke's dragoons. Ha! but didn't I want to fly at your throat when I heard that! I wanted to strangle you, I was so enraged to hear that it was you who had betrayed us and frustrated our fine plans to secure the monks' treasure. However, I contented myself with giving you a sound rap on the head and straightway communicated to his grace what you had confessed. You have got for your reward the entire ducal property, for you are chained to it so securely you cannot get away from it."

The next query I put to the cursed haidemaken priest was: "What has been done with the duchess?"

"You need not trouble yourself about her highness, my son; the duke is too shrewd a man of the world to make public the disgrace of his house. The beautiful Persida does not know that she has been betrayed. The causes assigned for your incarceration are forgery; the usurpation of the name of a noble knight; and for being a member of a robber band—for all of which you deserve death. That you have been condemned to suffer a hundred deaths for your dalliance with the lovely Persida, instead of only one for the transgressions assigned, no one will ever know. As

for the duchess: one of these fine days she will, after eating a peach or a pear, get a severe colic that will result in her death. The funeral ceremonies in the Vieznovieczky palace will be most imposing—and that will be the end of her grace. It might come to pass, however, that the obsequies of his grace might precede those of the duchess. It depends on which of the ducal pair gets the better of the other! But, you have only yourself to think of, my son. I am here to offer you one of two alternatives: Ask to be tried before a court which will sentence you to immediate death on the wheel—unless the duke out of compassion for a good comrade orders your head to be cut off. The other alternative is: Elect to remain in this hole, chained to the wall, battling with vermin while you live, and becoming food for them when the breath leaves your body. *Tertium non datur.*"

To this I made answer that I preferred to be executed without delay, even were I to be broiled on a gridiron over a slow fire. I was quite ready to die.

"Very well, my son, then I will proceed at once to administer to you the last sacraments—"

"Go to the devil!" I cried furiously, when he approached me with the wafer he had taken from his pocket. "I won't have any more of your cursed mummery. You are no better than I am—you too are sure to go to hell!"

"That is more than likely, my son," responded the accursed priest composedly. "The only difference between us is in the manner of our journeying thither. You will travel on foot—I on wheels. So, don't you

think it would be well to let me give you a lift on the way? With the heavy pack of sins on your back you might hang on to the tail-board of my wagon!"

I could not help but laugh at the rascal, so I said: "Very well, if your blessing will help me over the road more quickly, go ahead and let's have it!—and may the devil fly away with you!"

He thrust the wafer down my throat and I had hardly got it comfortably swallowed when I fell into a deep sleep. The wafer contained a powerful narcotic.

## THE WHITE DOVE.

In my death-like sleep I still saw the dungeon walls, still felt the iron fetters on neck, hands and feet. Instead of the tiny lamp flame, however, which had only dimly lighted the musty cell, a radiant light now filled it—a light that came from overhead. When, with great difficulty, I lifted my face toward the ceiling, I beheld an ethereal form bending above me; her white garments gleamed like snow under brilliant sunshine; her blue mantle was like the starry sky of evening. The coronet above her brow was like the crescent moon. The face was so radiant I could not look at it—my eyes were dazzled as when I gazed into the noon-day sun. The radiant vision held on her right arm an infant; the forefinger of its right hand was pressed against its lips. I believed the Holy Virgin had descended to me; but when the vision came nearer to me, kissed me, and called me by name, then I knew

that it was my Madus—my poor deserted, forgotten Madus!

I was so ashamed of the fetters which bound me. If she should ask why I wore them, how could I reply? "I wear them because of the beautiful woman who caused me to forget you."

But she did not ask any questions; she smiled tenderly, and said in her gentle tones:

"My poor Baran! How unhappy you seem! Cheer up—we are come to help you—to release you. My home is now in paradise—I will tell you how I came to dwell there. On Christmas eve, I was kneeling in front of the holy image you brought to me from Berdiczov, expecting every minute the arrival of the little guest for my Bethlehem crib, when I heard a familiar step outside the cottage. It was my father. I hurriedly snatched the blessed image from the table to hide it, for I knew the sight of it would anger him; but I was seized with such a terrible pain in my heart I had to press the image against it with both hands. I hardly recognized my father. His face was fearfully cut, and mutilated; one eye was gone. "Your precious Baran betrayed us," he gasped, glaring at me with the remaining eye. I opened my lips to speak for you, but before I could utter a word he said again: "You are his accomplice, you miserable creature! What are you hiding in your breast?" I could not lie, so I told him it was the image of the Blessed Virgin. "A gift from the Berdiczov monks I'll warrant!" he shrieked, seizing my hair and flinging me on the floor. I heard the keen blade of his cimeter hiss through the air—

then, it seemed as if the sky fell over me. The next instant I found myself in paradise, with every pain changed to bliss. I may not reveal to you the secrets of that blessed realm, my Baran. I may only tell you that our little child is with me—he was born in heaven. This is he—he is come to save his father from death."

As she spake these words the child bent toward me and took hold of the chains which bound my feet and hands. They fell asunder at his touch. But the iron band around my neck was too wide for his tiny fingers to clasp; it was impossible for him to break it. But he did what twenty-four horses could not have done: with one pull he drew from the wall the iron ring to which the neck-band was secured by a chain.

"My blessed child!" I exclaimed, kissing the little hands. "If your strength is so great, then seize hold of my hair, and bear me with you to your home above the clouds."

The little one laid his finger against his lips as a sign that he could not, or dared not speak; but the mother answered for him:

"No, my good Baran, you cannot come to us. Before that will be possible you will have to endure many more trials in this world of shadows. You will have to abide here until you shall have performed a good deed for which some one will say to you: 'God reward you.' One single good deed, my Baran, will do more toward winning paradise than a hundred pilgrimages, or a thousand prayers."

How sinful I am, your honors, is proved by the fact that I am still alive; and as it is not likely that I shall

have an opportunity to perform the deed, which will call down on me a blessing from heaven, I shall never again behold my little angel son, and his mother, my sainted Madus.

After the vision had spoken she beckoned me to follow her. The child touched the wall of the dungeon with his fingers, the stones parted, and we passed through the opening. The radiant form of my Madus illuminated the passage amid the rocks, the long flights of stairs we ascended. We seemed to thread our way through the catacombs. At last we emerged from the subterranean region into a dense forest. I saw how the shining garments of my conductress swept over the moss, giving to it, to the flowers, the grass, the trees, the same soft radiance that emanated from her form. Gradually the distance between me and the lovely vision widened; my feet became leaden; I could hardly move my limbs. Then the radiant appearance lost its human shape, until at last it seemed to me that I was looking down a long avenue between the trees at a faint glimmering light at the further end. The cold air blew across my face, and I awoke.

I was in the forest of my dream, around me were mammoth trees between which, a long way off, I could see the glimmering light of the open. The same beggar raiment I had worn to journey to Lemberg clothed me; my crutch, emptied of its gold, lay by my side. I made my way toward the light at the edge of the forest. I could see no signs of human habitation anywhere. How far I was from the scene of my magnificence and disgrace I cannot say. When I looked at my beggar's

rags, I could easily have believed my Lemberg experience an evil dream, had not the iron band about my neck been too convincing a proof of its reality.

"Well," here observed the prince, drawing a long breath, "that is a most remarkable story!—a miraculous rescue of a transgressor through the aid of the Almighty Father!"

To this the chair added: "I am inclined to believe that the prisoner's escape from the dungeon was effected through earthly, rather than heavenly assistance. It is more likely that the haidemaken priest, bribed by the duchess, conveyed the prisoner to the forest, and clad him in the rags which had been procured from the Jew Malchus."

"*I* believe the story just as the accused told it," asseverated his highness. "There are a number of similar cases on record—of notorious bandits having been released from imprisonment by the hands of an unborn babe."

"And I assure your highness"—Hugo ventured to insist—"that everything happened just as I related it. From the moment of my waking in the forest, a white dove nestled on my left shoulder, and accompanied me wherever I went. If I turned to look at it, when it would coo into my ear, it would fly to my right shoulder; but it seemed to prefer sitting on my left."

"Is the white dove sitting on either of your shoulders now?" queried the chair.

"No, your honor," sadly replied the prisoner; "it is not there now. I will tell you later how I came to lose it."

The prince announced his decision as follows:

"As the prisoner's release from the dungeon was accomplished through a miracle from heaven, it would not be seemly for a human judge to oppose divine favor. This transgression, therefore, may also be erased from the register."

# PART IV.

## WITH THE TEMPLARS.

## CHAPTER I.

### IN THE HOLLOW TREE.

With a ragged mantle on my back, a crutch in my hand, an iron band about my neck, and the white dove on my shoulder, where could I have gone?—even had I wished to leave the forest.

The rags and the crutch were fitting equipment for a beggar; but what should I have replied had anyone asked me why I wore the iron band on my neck? I was disgusted with the world and its wickedness.

Overwhelmed with remorse for the sins I had committed, I resolved to become a hermit and do penance —I would remain in the forest and adopt the rigorous life of an ascetic.

After a brief search I discovered a brook that would supply me with fresh water; hard by its banks an oak tree, many centuries old, with a large cavity in the trunk, offered the shelter I should require. I collected moss and dry leaves for my bed; for nourishment

there was a plentitude of nuts and wild fruits, and edible fungi. Wild bees furnished me with sweets.

I bound together two dry branches in form of a cross, set it up between two large stones, and performed my daily devotions in front of it.

During the day I roamed through the forest collecting stores for the winter; I laid up a supply of dried fruit, nuts, sow-bread and honey—the last I found in the upper part of my tree-house, where a swarm of bees had taken up their quarters.

Of the raspberries which grew plentifully along the brook, I made a sort of conserve, which I packed into boxes made of the bark of pine trees. All these provisions I stored in my tree-house, which I had firmly resolved never to quit.

But one thought disquieted me. If I remained in the forest how could I perform the good deed Madus had told me was necessary in order to win paradise? If I passed all my days in the hollow tree beside the brook, where no human being ever came near me, how was I to benefit my fellow creatures? How win the "God will reward you"—the open sesame to paradise? I pondered this over and over until at last an expedient suggested itself to me, by which I could make known my existence to my fellow-creatures and still remain in my hermitage. I looked about for two broad flat stones; these I fastened together at one side with a cord made of linden bark and hung them on the lower limb of a tree. With a third stone for a clapper I rang my primitive bell three times daily—morn, noon and evening—surely, I said to myself, some one will hear

the sound and come to see what is the meaning of it. When the people in the neighborhood learn that a devout hermit is living in the forest, they will visit him, and perhaps bestow alms on him.

But, in vain I rang three times every day, no visitors came to my hollow tree, save the fawns that came to drink at the brook, and the wild cats that came to prey on them. Many a time I rescued a young deer from the claws of the feline enemy. It was to be regretted that the dumb beasts I rescued could not have thanked me for the good deed. One day I returned later than was my wont from collecting moss and ferns to protect me from the cold of winter (I had already fashioned a door of willow withes to keep the snow out of my tree-house). What was my surprise to find the door open, and all my provisions gone! Not a trace of the nuts remained but the shells; there was not a vestige of the dried fruit; the boxes of raspberry conserve were lying about on the ground, broken and crushed, as if they had been trodden under foot by the marauders. Even the tent-shaped honey-comb in the upper portion of my dwelling was gone, the plundered bees were buzzing angrily around the tree outside.

I could hardly refrain from uttering a malediction on the thief who had despoiled me of my winter store; but I remembered my pious vows, and reproached myself instead: "Shame on you, pious anchorite," I said, "were you so wedded to earthly possessions that the loss of them rouses your anger? You were too proud of your store. You were going to play the sovereign in the wilderness. Others had an equal right to that

which you imagined belonged only to yourself. The truly pious anchorite does not lay up stores for the morrow. He depends on the Master to supply his needs. He must pay heed to nothing save his prayers for the wicked, and praises for the Master. You have been fitly punished for your arrogance." I said further, "Perhaps this has happened for the best. Who can say but the despoiler prayed that God might reward the one who had placed the provisions in the hollow tree. If so be that was the case, it was a fine hunger it took all my store to appease!"

And again: "Who knows? Perhaps the hungry one is a great prophet—St. Peter himself, maybe. I have heard that that distinguished saint occasionally visits a poor man, and eats up a winter's supply of provisions, only to return it an hundred fold. If so be it was St. Peter then he will return tomorrow and so fill your tree with viands and treasure you will never again want for anything—and, maybe, he will also bestow on you a passport that will admit you to paradise whenever you choose to go!"

Consoling myself with such thoughts, I sounded the bell as usual for vespers; then I drank heartily of brook water, lay down on my soft bed, and dreamed until morning, of flying hams and kindred paradisal delights. At sunrise, I rang the early matin bell; then hurried away, in order not to disturb the prophet when he came to prepare the surprise for me.

I spent the entire day wandering about the forest, guessing what my benefactor would bestow on me in return for the nuts, fruits and honey he had taken—

would it be the widow's oil-cruse with its never-failing contents? or, a pair of bread-supplying ravens? or, a barley loaf from Mount Gilead? or, a swarm of those savory locusts which had served as fare for John the Baptist?

In my rambling I came across a heap of beech-nuts. I hesitated to gather them. What need to take the trouble? There would be plenty, and to spare, in the hollow tree. However, I filled my pockets with the nuts, then turned my face homeward.

As I was rather late, I rang for vespers, and told my beads (I had made a beautiful rosary of acorns) before going to my hermitage. A deep growl came from the hollow tree when I approached it.

"He is here!" I exclaimed joyfully. "He is waiting to see me. That he is no ordinary person I can tell by his voice!"

I crept on hands and knees toward the tree, and peeped into the cavity. The next instant I was on my feet, hurling a million *donnerwetters* at the shaggy bear, whose monstrous body quite filled the only apartment of my dwelling.

I forgot that I was an anchorite, and cursed the brute roundly—

"*Votum violatum*," dictated the chair. "Broken vow—blasphemy! *Capite plectetur*."

"By my faith!" interposed the prince with considerable emphasis. "I would have sworn too! *Qui bene distinquet, bene docet.* How goes the paragraph relating to blasphemy? 'He that curses his fellowman'—and so forth. But, it doesn't say anything about pun-

ishment for him who curses his 'fellow-bear.' You see, therefore, that the *votum ruptum* does not fit this crime, for it was not the prisoner who broke the vow of the anchorite, but the bear; consequently bruin is the delinquent."

"Very good," assented the chair. "Then the bear is the guilty party: *ursus comburatur!* The robbery of the temple follows: I am curious to hear how the prisoner will clear himself of that! That he will accomplish it I am willing to wager my head!"

What was I to do? continued Hugo, when the mayor had concluded his remark. My house was occupied by a tenant who would not let me share it with him. I had nowhere else to go. I could not find another hermitage. If I could not be a hermit, I could become a beggar—begging was also a way to gain a livelihood, and I possessed the necessary equipment for it.

In Poland, no one who can say: "Give me bread," needs die of hunger. The iron band on my neck might, after all, be of advantage to me; it would give me a sort of superiority over other mendicants. If I were asked how I came by it, I should say that it had been forged on my neck by the Saracens, who took me captive when I was in the Holy Land, and because I had made my escape through a miracle, I continued to wear the band as a penance.

The good people to whom I told this story believed it; it brought me many a groschen and carried me comfortably across Poland.

I had no sooner crossed into Brandenburg (I was

on my way to my native city, where I intended taking up the trade of my father, an honest and respectable tanner) than I was surrounded by a crowd of people—not a charitably disposed crowd, but inquisitive.

They wanted to know where I came from, where was I going, who and what was I and how I dared to have the impertinence to beg in their city.

I replied that I was a pilgrim from the Holy Land; and that instead of thinking it an impertinence for me to beg from them, they ought to consider it a distinction to have in their community a mendicant with an iron collar around his neck.

But the Brandenburgers are inclined to believe themselves more clever than the rest of the world. The bailiff seized me, dragged me to the market place, where he proceeded to question me for the benefit of the whole city.

"Who are you?" he inquired.

"I am hungry," I said in reply.

"Where do you come from?"

"From Jerusalem."

"Don't you attempt to deceive me, sirrah! I know the way to Jerusalem. Through what provinces did you journey?"

"Through Marcomannia, and Scythia; through Bess Arabia, and Arabia Petræa; through Bactria, and Mesopotamia; and now I come direct from Caramania—"

"Stop, stop! You are saying what is not true," interrupted the bailiff. "Praise be to God! we Brandenburgers have maps, and know how to get to foreign

countries. The way to Palestine is through Zingaria, Paflagonia, Cappadocia, and cinnamon-scented India.

"Well," I explained, "I did travel through those countries too, but it was at night, when I couldn't see to read their names on the guide-boards."

"And what means that iron band on your neck?"

"That, your honor, was fastened about my neck by the black sultan, Zagachrist, who held me captive fifty-two years and three days."

"You are not yet thirty years old."

"No, in this part of the world I am not; but in Abyssinia, where the sun is so hot, the days contract to such an extent, that one of your years here would be six there."

"What an unconscionable liar you are!" exclaimed the bailiff. "Heat does not contract. On the contrary, it expands, which accounts for the days being longer in summer than in winter. We Brandenburgers know that very well."

He seized me by the collar, to drag me to prison, but I held back, and said in a loud voice—loud enough for the crowd to hear:

"I tell you I am right; heat does contract. Just you sit on a hot stove and see if your leather breeches don't shrivel up under you."

The crowd was on my side; but that trial in the market-place might have resulted disastrously for me, had not a knight just then chanced to ride that way. He wore on his head a plumed helmet; his body was protected by a coat of mail. From his shoulders hung a crimson mantle, on which was embroidered a large

white cross. A heart-shaped shield swung from the pommel of his saddle.

My eyes were at once attracted to this shield, on which were the ensigns armorial: a mounted knight like himself, and on the same horse a ragged pilgrim of a like pattern with myself.

"Ho, ho!" here interrupted the chair in triumph. "You may have been able to hoodwink the Brandenburg bailiff, but you can't do the same with me! You needn't try to make this court believe you saw anyone wearing the coat-of-arms of an order that was abolished in the 14th century."

"I know very well, your honor, that the order of the Templars was abolished at the time you mention, but a portion of them took refuge in Brandenburg, where the order exists to this day under the name of 'Dornenritter.'"

Having made this explanation, Hugo continued his confession:

At sight of the Templar a great commotion arose among the people crowding the market-place; the women pressed toward him to kiss the hem of his mantle, in their enthusiasm almost dragging him from the saddle. The knight had red hair, and a long beard of the same fiery hue.

"There is the red monk," said the bailiff to me. "Do you try to make him believe you have been in Palestine? He has been there twice—once by land and once by sea—and he has slaughtered more than two hundred heathen and liberated thousands of pilgrims from

slavery. Talk to him; he will know how to question you."

I was in a fix, and no mistake. The knight would be sure at once to detect the errors of my geography.

He rode quite close to me, passed his hand over his long beard and examined me from head to foot with his keen eyes.

"Can you prove to me that you come from the Holy Land?" he asked in a voice so stern and deep-toned it made me start and tremble.

But a lucky thought came to me; I had a convincing proof under my arm—the old Turk's crutch, the shaft of which was closely wound with brass wire in a fanciful pattern.

" Will you examine this, Sir Knight?" I said in reply —holding the crutch toward him. "You, who are familiar with the Arabic characters, will find here a record of my wanderings—the entire history of my wretched captivity, and miraculous deliverance."

It was the knight's turn to start and tremble. I saw at once from his countenance, that he knew no more about Arabic than—ah—than your honor, and that he was afraid I might betray him, and prove to the multitude that he had never trod the sacred soil of the Holy Land. The hand he extended for the crutch trembled, but he preserved a bold front, as he turned the brass-bound shaft around and around in his fingers, and pretended to decipher the oriental characters. After several minutes, he returned the crutch to me and said in an impressive tone:

"This is indeed Arabic—or, rather, Saracenic, the

language of Turcomania. Your crutch, devout pilgrim, testifies to the truth of everything you have told these good people. Come with me to my castle, where you will be a welcome and honored guest."

Before he had quite concluded this speech, the bailiff had lost himself in the crowd—he was nowhere to be seen.

I was hoisted to the shoulders of a pair of sturdy citizens, and, accompanied by the shouting multitude, borne in triumph to the Templars' castle, situated on a moat-encircled hill, a little distance from the city.

Here, I was committed to the care of the guards on duty; they stripped me of my rags; lifted me into a vat of water, scrubbed me thoroughly, combed and shaved my head, and then put on me a scarlet habit of coarse cloth, which, to judge from its ample proportions, must once have garbed the form of a brother whose conditions of life had been more fortunate than mine.

Attired thus, I was conducted to the refectory, where the red-bearded knight and twelve of his companions were assembled.

"*Quadraginta tonitrua,* lad, you please me well!" exclaimed the red-bearded knight, who seemed to be the leader. "Never, in all my life, have I ever heard so glib a tongue at lying as yours! You must stop here with us. The devil has taken our sacristan—that's his habit you've got on—he died of small-pox yesterday."

You may imagine my feelings when I heard that I was wearing the garment of a man that had succumbed to so loathsome a disease!

I made bold to say that I had never learned the duties requisite to the office of a sacristan.

"*Per septem archidiabolos!*" merrily exclaimed the knight. "I believe you. But, we will instruct you—never fear!"

Here he noticed the iron band on my neck and added: "Ha, *Lucifer te corripiat!* Why do you wear that curious band around your neck?"

In reply I stammered something about a solemn vow, whereupon the entire company burst into hearty laughter.

"*Ut Belsebub te submergat in paludes inferni, trifurcifer!*" bawled the red knight. "Either you wear the band in pursuance of a vow—solemn or otherwise—or it was forged on your neck in punishment for a theft. If the former, then continue to wear it to the end of your days; if the latter, then we have an armorer who will relieve you of it in short order."

To this I made answer:

"Though I wear the iron band because of a solemn vow, the Sir Knights may believe it is in punishment for a theft."

The merry company laughed again, and the armorer was summoned at once to relieve me of the uncomfortable collar.

## BAPHOMET.

I now believed I had ultimately attained what I most desired—a comfortable position in a religious house, where I might pass the remainder of my days in peace, and free from care. I should have no further need to

trouble about providing for food and drink, and the where to lay my head. My duties were light; I had to ring the bell for prayers three times daily; keep clean the church vessels, and take care of all the vestments. All my time not occupied with these simple tasks, I was permitted to devote to pious contemplation. I soon won the confidence of Knight Elias, the red-bearded superior. I was named Eliezer. It had taken me six months and more to beg my way through Poland, consequently, Passion week began soon after my arrival at the Templars' castle. I was apprehensive that I should not be able adequately to perform the duties requisite for my office during the solemn season, as I was not yet sufficiently familiar with the Roman Catholic service, having only lately become a neophite. But, when I confided my doubts to Knight Elias, he replied encouragingly:

"Don't you worry, Frater Eliezer, every night during the coming week we shall rehearse scenes from the 'Passion Play,' which will make you familiar with the services expected of you."

This assurance gave me confidence, and I looked forward with impatience to Maundy-Thursday, as on the evening of that day the preparations for the devotional ceremonies were to begin.

Maundy-Thursday arrived. In the evening, after I had closed and locked the gates after vespers, Knight Elias bade me take a lamp, go to the chapel, and wait there until the clock struck the hour of midnight, when I should hear three taps on the door of the crypt. I was to open the door without delay, receive with

becoming respect the guests who would appear, and obey every order they might give me. I did not betray the astonishment I felt on receiving this very singular behest. I never was what may be termed "faint-hearted." I dare say because my curiosity always was superior to my timidity; and I confess I was most curious to see what manner of guests would come out of the crypt.

The last stroke of twelve was followed by three raps on the crypt door. I hastened to open it, and was amazed to find the stairway leading to the tomb brilliantly lighted, and mounting it were a half dozen or more female forms, clad in antique costumes—such as are seen only in the canvases adorning the walls of churches and royal palaces.

All the women were highly rouged and powdered; one had her eyebrows penciled with black; another with minium, and another had hers tinted with gold. All carried in their hands gaily colored wax tapers. They were not in the least like the ghosts I had expected to see; and I was not in the least frightened of them either!

Young blood coursed through my veins then, and it flowed more swiftly when my eyes rested on the beautiful visitors—even though they were denizens of another world!

The ghosts saw at once that it was not the old sacristan who had admitted them; and believed it necessary to introduce themselves. The first one said:

"I am Jezebel, wife of King Ahab. Fetch the baptismal basin, I want to perform my ablutions."

The second announced:

"I am Salome, daughter of Herodias. Bring me the golden ciborium."

The third said:

"I am Bathsheba. Bring the sacred oil, I want some for my hair."

The fourth:

"I am Delilah. Bring a chalice, I want a drink."

The fifth:

"I am Ashtoreth. Bring the censer, I want some perfume."

"I am Tamar," announced the sixth. "Bring a lachrymatory, I want to fill it with my tears."

There were seven in the company. The seventh had on her head a crown, and was clad in a robe of gold-brocade with a long train. "I am Mylitta, Queen of Sheba," she announced in a voice that sounded like a sweet-toned bell. "Bring me the pyx."

Now, although the rest of the orders had confounded me with their impiety, I had obeyed them, because I had been commanded to do so. This last, however, made me hesitate; I could not lay sacrilegious hands on so holy a vessel.

I shuddered, and looked with horrified eyes at the commanding phantom. Suddenly, she lifted her arm, and gave me a sound blow on the back, at the same time screaming:

"Don't you hear me, dolt? I want the pyx." Feeling convinced that further hesitation to obey this visitant from another world would not be well for me, I went to the altar, and with a violently trembling hand

lifted the sacred vessel from its accustomed place and brought it to the lady.

"Now, follow us," she commanded; and the procession from the crypt passed on, I following in the rear, out of the chapel, up a winding staircase, to a part of the castle I had not yet been in. We halted in front of a gilded iron door; it opened in response to three raps, and I saw into a long, magnificently furnished saloon. There were no windows in it; a mysterious radiance shone from the niches in the walls, which were hung with gold-embroidered silk.

As we crossed the threshold, a heavy curtain across the further end of the saloon parted, and several male figures, garbed in old-time costumes—Turkish, Roman, Persian, Chaldean and Egyptian—came to meet the women, who greeted them thus:

"Welcome, Ahasuerus!"

"Baal greets you, Nebuchadnezzar!"

"Osiris, bless you, Pharaoh!" and so on, to Herod, Pilate, Nero, Sardanapalus—in all of whom I recognized my sir knights. My red-bearded patron answered to the name of Judas Iscariot. It was a distinguished company!

The greetings between the knights and the ladies over, my patron turned toward me. I was standing near the door—and said:

"Malchus, come hither."

I looked around to see who Malchus might be, but finding no one near me, guessed that I too had been given a name suitable for the occasion—that of the

chief priests' servant, who lifted his hand against the Savior.

My patron's next words assured me that I had guessed correctly:

"If your ears have really been cut off, Malchus—which they must have been, since you can't hear, we must ask Ben Hanotzri to fasten them to your head again!"

I had not yet learned to whom they alluded when they mentioned that name.

After his last speech to me, my patron took my hand and led me up to the knight they called Nebuchadnezzar. He had strings of costly pearls wound in his beard and hair—as one sees in ancient Persian statues, and pictures.

"What has Malchus done that he deserves to be admitted to the service of Baphomet?" he inquired.

My patron answered for me:

"He has been a heretic, an atheist, a thief, a murderer, a counterfeiter, an adulterer—"

"The very man for us!" interrupted Nebuchadnezzar—and then I understood why my welcome to the conventual residence had been so cordial!

I was asked to take off my monk's habit, and given the dress of a Roman lictor, in which character my first task was to remove the lid from a sarcophagus that stood in a niche in the wall.

I was horrified when I saw that it contained a wax image of our Savior, as He descended from the cross, with the five gaping wounds in His body, and the crown of thorns on His head.

The knights gathered about the sarcophagus, and began a discussion, to which I listened with fear and trembling. They spoke in Latin, and as I am quite familiar with the language I understood every word.

One of the knights asserted, that Christ was an eon of the God-father, Jaldabaoth, who had sent Him to the earth, as the Messiah of the Pneumatici, and to vanquish his, Jaldabaoth's, arch-enemy, Ophiomorpho; that Christ, having failed for want of courage to accomplish the task, Jaldabaoth had allowed Him to be crucified in punishment; all of which was satisfactorily proved by Valentinus, the Gnostic. Another of the knights insisted, that Christ was an imposter, as was verified by Basilides of Alexandria, and Bardesane; and that His true name was Ben Jonah Hanotzri.

The earth seemed to sink from under my feet as I listened to this blasphemous disputation. Though I am a wicked sinner, my reverence for all things holy is boundless. I held my hands over my ears to shut out the horrible words, but I could not help but hear some of them.

The third knight maintained that the whole story of Jesus Christ was a myth—He had never been born—had never died. The entire legend was an emblem, a symbol that, like Brahma, and Isis, had never possessed a material body; and that all images of Him were idols, like those which represented Basal, or Dagon.

I imagined that blasphemy could go no further; but the fourth knight convinced me that even hyperbole may possess a superlative.

The fourth speaker was Nebuchadnezzar; *he* declared he could prove from the Scriptures, that Jesus Christ was that Demiurge, who tortures mankind with laws; renders unhappy and wretched the dwellers on earth; prohibits all things that are pleasant and agreeable to the senses; commands man to do what is good for his fellows, though nature's laws prompt him to do that which is best for himself—be it good or evil for his neighbor. Consequently, it was the plain duty of every sentient being to defy this Demiurge, to disobey the laws promulgated by him; to practice, instead of refrain from: cheating, robbery, murder, forgery, intemperance, gluttony, debauchery; and that whoever it was that had imposed on mankind the yoke of bondage, the so-called virtues—were he eon, Demiurge, Ben Jonah Hanotzri, or Jesus Christ, deserved persecution, scourging, and crucifixion. "Who then," he demanded in concluding his sacrilegious harangue, "is the true Messiah?"

"Baphomet! Baphomet!" shouted the entire company of knights and ladies as with one voice.

Nebuchadnezzar then beat with his fists on a large tam-tam, upon which the curtain at the end of the saloon was drawn back, revealing a platform on which were two statues, life-size. The one on the right was Baphomet, with the two faces, one masculine, the other feminine. A huge serpent was wound twelve times about the statue; on each of the rings thus formed was engraved one of the twelve signs of the zodiac. One hand held the sun; the other the moon; the feet rested

on a globe, that rested in turn on the back of a crocodile.

The other statue represented Mylitta. She was seated on a wild boar; a crown of gleaming rubies and carbuncles adorned her brow. The knights and ladies, one after the other, approached the statues, kissed the shoulders of Baphomet, then the knees of Mylitta.

After this ceremony, they joined hands, forming a circle around the images, and began to dance to a song they chanted in a tongue unknown to me. Before the dance began, I was told to fill all the sacred vessels with the wine contained in several large jars near the entrance. This was drank from time to time in toasts to Baphomet and his companion image.

If my horror was great, my curiosity was greater. I mastered the former feeling, in order to see what would be the end of the sacrilegious orgy.

The wine jars were soon emptied, and I was ordered by Iscariot to refill them in the cellar. On my return to the saloon, I found the company seated around the table; when I approached the Queen of Sheba to refill the chalice, from which she was drinking, she said to me:

"Malchus, this crown of mine is so heavy; go down to the chapel and fetch me the one from the head of the woman of Nazareth."

I went cold from crown to sole at this request.

There was in the chapel a beautiful image of our Lady, with a crown of pearls and diamonds on her head—the gift of a pious princess. To this image the devout folk of the surrounding region made pilgrim-

ages on holy days; and it was covered with all manner of costly gifts from the grateful believers. And this was the "Woman of Nazareth," whose crown I was ordered to fetch for the shameless wanton.

"Didn't you hear the lady's order?" bawled my rufous-bearded patron, thumping the table with his mailed fist. "Go at once to the chapel and fetch the crown."

If I had refused to obey I should have been killed; but I almost fainted with horror while performing the errand. When I returned with the jeweled crown to the hall of the worship of Baphomet, the demon of licentious revelry had been loosed; the women, as well as the men, were dancing with wild abandon. The Queen of Sheba snatched the crown from my hand, adjusted it on her dishevelled locks, then returned to the Phrygian dance, led by herself and Nebuchadnezzar; her hair stood almost straight out from her head, as she whirled around and around, so swiftly, that she and her partner seemed but one form with two faces—like Baphomet whom they worshipped. After all had indulged in the frantic revelry until they sank exhausted to the divans scattered about the hall, I was ordered to collect the sacred vessels and return them to the chapel, and then to go to my rest.

"He must drink with me before he goes," cried Ashtoreth.

"Here, Malchus!" she unloosed from her girdle a flask, and held it to my lips. The flask was an exquisite piece of workmanship; it was made of chased gold and richly set with Turkish fire opals.

This wine, Malchus," continued the lady, "is the juice of the grape planted by Noah. The stone jar in which it has been preserved for so many centuries stands beside the sarcophagus of my grand-mother Semiramis, in Nineveh—drink, it will do you good."

On my hesitating, she suddenly flung her arm around my neck, drew my head close to her own, took a good pull from the flask, then pressed her lips to mine, and forced me to swallow the wine from her mouth.

Never have I tasted a sweeter, a more intoxicating, more stupefying liquor!

"Now drink," commanded the heathen queen, placing the flask in my hand. I put it to my lips; but perceived at once that the wine had a different taste from that I had received from her mouth. It was bitter, and had a peculiar bouquet. I took only one swallow; but pretended to send several more after the first one.

"You may keep the flask as a remembrance," said the lady when I handed it back to her. She flung it among the church vessels I had collected together in the baptismal basin, the better to carry them back to the chapel.

I hurried from the saloon with my precious burden; carefully washed all the vessels through three waters; then restored them to their proper places in the chapel. When I had reverently placed the crown on our Lady's head, I knelt at her feet, and penitently kissed the hem of her robe.

"Now what shall I do with this thing?" I inquired of myself, surveying the wine-flask in my hand. "Where

shall I hide it for safe-keeping? It is worth a deal of money. It would bring me enough to buy an acre of ground, or a mill with five wheels. I'll just fasten it securely, here under my lictor's cuirass for the present." I did so; then, without heeding where I was, I lay down, and almost immediately fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

I don't know how long I slept; I was roused by some one shaking me vigorously, and crying: "Wake up! wake up!"

"Yes, yes, Iscariot," I muttered sleepily, "I'll get up directly."

"O, Trifurcifer!" exclaimed a familiar voice; "the wretch calls me Iscariot! Just wait, you drunken rogue! I'll sober you!"

The thorough drenching I received from the large can of water thrown over me, brought me to my senses.

"Well, my pious Silenus!" growled the knight. "You are a fine fellow to set on guard, aren't you? I order you to keep watch outside the door of the crypt until midnight, and find you the next morning lying inside the cellar door, with your mouth under an open faucet. We were obliged to carry you up here—not knowing whether you were alive or dead."

"Where—where is the costly flask Ashtoreth gave me?" I asked, feeling in vain about my body for the souvenir bestowed on me by the heathen queen. There was neither flask nor leather cuirass, only the old coarse habit I had inherited from my predecessor in office.

"Come—come," angrily exclaimed the knight, shak-

ing me again. "Stop dreaming, and hasten to the chapel; it is time to ring the bell for mass."

I could hardly bring myself to believe that it was only a dream—it seemed so real, but I could find no trace of midnight revelry anywhere—indeed, I could not find the winding staircase, which I had ascended from the chapel to the hall of the worship of Baphomet. And yet I doubted.

The chapel was filled at mass with devout worshippers. A solemn scene was when the knights, garbed in coarse gray habits, and bare-footed, crept on hands and knees to the stone coffin, in which lay a waxen image of our Lord. They kissed the marble steps leading to the platform on which the coffin stood, and when I saw them gather about the holy image, my dream seemed so real that, in my excitement, I would have cried in a loud voice to the kneeling congregation:

"People! Christians! rise—rise! do not kneel in the presence of these blasphemers!" had not the white dove on my shoulder pressed her wings against my lips.

Then the rich tones of the organ filled the chapel; and the women's voices chanting the "Miserere" sounded so familiar—exactly like those I had heard in my dream, singing bacchanalian songs—that I said to myself: "That is Ashtoreth's voice—that is Delilah's, and that deep-toned contralto is Jezebel's!" Again I saw the singers emerge from the crypt and move toward the winding stair-case. Ah! it was a dream after all! There was no winding staircase. Where I had seen the open door, which gave egress to it, was a

blank wall; and against it the massive marble monument of the grand master, Arminius, who was represented by a recumbent knight in full pontificals, with hands devoutly crossed on his breast.

Yes, it was only a dream!

My heart was relieved of a heavy weight. It was such a relief to feel certain that I had not taken the jeweled crown from our blessed Lady's head; and that the Queen of Sheba had not worn it while dancing in adoration of an idol.

When the services were concluded, and I approached the image of our Lady, to replenish the oil in the perpetual lamp at her feet, the doubts as to my having dreamed the scenes of the bacchanalian revelry came back in full force; some one had been tampering with the jeweled crown on the head of the sacred image—it had been turned around!

There was a pearl in front of the diadem, and a ruby in the back—both as large as a hazel-nut. Today, the ruby gleamed like a coal of fire, where always before the radiance of the pearl had vied with the pure whiteness of the waxen brow. The crown had been reversed—I had not dreamed after all!

This day was, as I have mentioned before, Good Friday—the day of universal fasting. The knights' observance of the day was so rigid that they would not even administer to a dying novice the medicines necessary to alleviate his suffering, because they were composed of manna and hydromel, both of which, containing nutriment, were considered food. Even I

fasted the entire day—of a necessity, though, for there was nothing served in the refectory!

My elastic conscience would have permitted me to partake—sparingly, of course!—of food; and I regretted that I had not possessed the forethought to lay aside from the banquet of the preceding night (if it really had not been a dream) the legs of a three thousand-year-old quail!

But, had I done so, they would doubtless have vanished with the pretty flask given me by the heathen queen. When I made my duty-rounds as usual on Good Friday evening, I found my red-bearded patron waiting for me in the sacristy. He said to me:

"This evening, Malchus, you will watch as before at the door of the crypt—but see that you stop there, and keep awake! Don't let me find you again in the cellar tomorrow morning."

I said to myself: "I shall be very sure not to go to sleep this time!"

The guests arrived earlier this evening. The clock in the tower had not yet ceased striking eleven, when the three knocks sounded on the crypt door.

The ancient beauties did not think it necessary to introduce themselves as before, but they gave me the same orders for the sacred vessels.

When I moved toward the altar, in obedience to the Queen of Sheba's behest, she called after me: "Don't look back, Malchus; if you do Satan will fly away with you!"

I did not look backward; I had no need. When I held the gold lid of the chalice in front of me, it

served the same purpose as a mirror, and in it I saw Jezebel walk up to the Arminius monument, lay her hand against the head of the recumbent statue, and thrust it to one side, whereupon the entire mass of marble swung noiselessly forward, revealing an opening in the wall through which I saw a winding staircase.

Pretending not to have seen anything, or to notice anything unusual in the opening in the wall, I followed the ladies up the stair with the articles they bade me bring after them.

The long table in Baphomet's hall was again loaded with all sorts of eatables: baked meats, pastry, sweets, fruits. "Meats!" I exclaimed to myself, "meats on Good Friday, when all Christians, even the Calvinists, fast and read their prayer-books to find consolation for their souls and forgetfulness for their stomachs!" And what a feast it was! One might well have believed that hosts and guests had not eaten anything for two or three thousand years! Had I been endowed with the hands of an Aegeon I could not have supplied the viands and wine as rapidly as the hungry and thirsty revelers demanded them of me. I seemed to be continually running to, or returning from, the wine-cellar.

Similar scenes to those enacted the preceding night followed the banquet; only with variations one would hardly believe the human mind capable of inventing.

The Queen of Sheba was even more reckless and abandoned than before; she ordered me to bring her the mantle from the shoulders of the "Woman of Nazareth." I hesitated again to perform the sacrile-

gious errand, but a sound blow on my back from Iscariot's fist sent me hurrying to the chapel.

When I returned with the mantle the queen was in need of it, for she was not to be distinguished from the nude goddess on the back of the wild boar. I was so ashamed for her, I could not lift my eyes when I handed her the mantle. Ashtoreth laughed heartily at me, and exclaimed:

"Here, Malchus, I will drink to Baphomet from this flask; then you shall drink to me."

She drank first, then handed the flask to me; it was the same one she had presented to me the night before.

I had learned something since then! I knew there were trick flasks with two compartments, which might contain two different kinds of liquor without becoming mixed. If the neck of the flask were turned to the right, one of the compartments would be opened; the contents of the other would flow, were the neck turned to the left.

When the heathen queen placed the flask to her lips I had watched her closely, and had seen that her wrist turned slightly to the right. This movement I took good care to copy when I drank, and, as I had guessed, the wine was deliciously sweet.

I took a good, long pull before removing the flask from my lips.

"Very good wine, isn't it?" observed Ashtoreth.

"A trifle bitter," I replied, making a wry face, upon which she filliped my nose with her finger, and exclaimed, laughingly:

"You don't know what is good, Malchus! The wine

in this flask is some of that left from the marriage feast at Cana. You may keep this flask, too; put it with the one I gave you last night."

This remark set the entire blasphemous crew into a roar of merriment.

"You may remove these vessels now," said Nebuchadnezzar, when the laughter had subsided, "and fetch us some *spiritus vini.*"

I removed the unclean church vessels and brought from the cellar a large stone jug of *spiritus vini.* The simple juice of the grape was not strong enough for the drunken demons; they wanted the more fiery brandy.

An idea came into my head as I was going to the cellar. The *spiritus vini* was made in Russia; the mouths of the jugs containing it were sealed so skillfully that only those persons who understood the secret could remove the cork. I had learned this secret while with the haidemaken.

I opened the jug in the cellar, poured out some of the brandy, and filled it up with the drugged wine in the flask intended for me. Then I sealed up the jug and took it to the banquet hall.

"Did you drink any of it?" demanded the knight whom the rest called Herod, when I set the jug on the table.

"I swear by Baphomet I did not!" I replied truthfully.

"Then open the jug," commanded Pilate.

I made believe to pull and tug and twist the cork—I could not remove it from the neck. At last Ahab snatched the jug impatiently from my hands, and after

"I took my lamp, descended to the crypt"

trying in vain for several moments to accomplish what I had failed to do, he set it in a silver basin and struck at the neck with his sword. The jug was broken, of course, and the liquor filled the basin. Then, Bath-sheba and Tamar flung into it figs, raisins and orange peel; Delilah took a lighted taper from the candelabra and set fire to the huge dish of crambamboli; at the same moment all the other lights in the hall were extinguished.

Nebuchadnezzar now began to ladle out the burning liquor into goblets which he passed to the rest of the company. The flame dispensing king, with his four horns, the fire-sipping forms around him, their faces blanched to a death-like pallor by the green-blue light of the burning brandy, formed a group that excelled in hideousness every illustration I had yet seen of the *danse macabre.*

I fled in horror and disgust from the infernal orgy, fully convinced that I was not dreaming this time. I was determined to make my escape from the abode of demons and idol worshippers.

I said to myself: "If these human beings—that they are not phantoms I am convinced—came to the castle through the crypt, then I, another human being, may go out the way they entered."

I took my lamp, descended to the crypt, and discovered that one of the memorials, which lined the walls, had been shoved to one side. An examination of this memento to a deceased knight revealed that it was not a slab of marble, but a sheet of tin painted to imitate the more solid material. Nor was the niche it

covered a tomb, but the outlet to a narrow stairway that ascended in steep spirals from the crypt, opposite to the one which descended to it from the chapel.

I mounted seventeen steps, when further progress was barred by a statue—that of Saint Sebastian. The heroic martyr was represented bound to a tree, his body filled with arrows, as he had appeared when being tortured to death by the commands of the godless Diocletian.

I had seen this statue often enough by day in the reception-hall of the castle; then it stood in its niche face toward the room; here, at the head of the secret stairway from the crypt, it stood with its face also toward me. "Surely," said I to myself, "St. Sebastian must know something about the secret outlet."

And he did.

I began to examine the niche; then the statue. I noticed that three of the arrows in the breast were brass, and that the one in the middle was brighter than the other two, as if it had been taken hold of frequently. I mounted the pedestal, and, with one arm around the saint to steady myself, I tried to turn the brighter arrow. After a little, it yielded to the pressure of my hand, and the statue, as well as the niche, began to turn slowly on an unseen axis, and in a few moments I saw the starlit sky above me.

Then I turned the arrow in the opposite direction, and found myself returned to my prison. I had solved the mystery of the phantoms' appearance in the chapel! I returned to the chapel and examined the mechanism

concealed under the Arminius monument. What would be the result, I asked myself, if I turned the head of the grand master back to its proper position?

I did so, and the monument swung back to its place, concealing the entrance to the hall of Baphomet.

By this time the blasphemers in the hall were sound asleep, and heaven alone knew when they would waken! And when they did, they would not be able to get out of their Satan's temple, for it had neither door nor windows.

No one would know what had become of them—whither they had gone. When they found a way out of their prison—if ever—I should be far enough away over mountain and valley!

I sketched a rapid plan of escape: I would go to the Archbishop of Aix-la-Chapelle and lay information against the knights of Baphomet; and, in order to gain credence for my story, I would take with me the desecrated church vessels. No devout Christian should drink again from the chalice defiled by the lips of Salome and Delilah; should have his offspring christened from the basin polluted by Nebuchadnezzar; should receive the holy water from the aspergill, defiled by being used to stir the infernal mixture concocted by Tamar and Bathsheba; not one of the vessels should be used again, until they had been thoroughly cleansed and re-consecrated by the proper authorities.

"A most praiseworthy determination! You proved yourself a true Christian!" exclaimed the prince, deeply incensed by the impiety of the *donnenritter*, the mere

hearing of whose licentious conduct made a godly man feel the need of absolution. "You did what any honest and respectable Christian would have done in your place!"

"Didn't I say so?" in triumph exclaimed the mayor, beating the table with his staff. "Didn't I say the rascal would talk himself out of the church robbery? Instead of sentencing him for the crime, he is commended for it."

Hereupon the prince and the mayor became involved in so animated a dispute that each sprang from his chair and begun to pound with his fists on the table with such vigor that the candle-sticks, ink-horn and sand-box danced quite a lively jig.

The argument continued until his highness suddenly remembered what was becoming to his dignity; then he rapped the court to order and announced that the hearing was adjourned until the next day.

* * * * *

The following morning Hugo resumed his confession:

I found a stout leather bag in the sacristy, into which I put all the church vessels of gold and silver which had been defiled in the bacchanalian orgies. I did not forget the Virgin's diadem, either.

My left shoulder ached dreadfully under the heavy load, but, because the white dove I told you about was perched on the other shoulder, I would not shift the bag from side to side, which would have made it easier

to carry. The revolving Saint Sebastian enabled me to escape from the castle, but I still had a high bastion to scale. I found the rope ladder by means of which the women had climbed over, and very soon I was on the high road, travelling as swiftly as I could for the heavy bag, toward the harbor—

"Hold!" interrupted the chair, "I've caught you at last! If what you have told us is true, why didn't you go at once with the bag of church property to the burgomaster of the city, and tell him of your discovery at the castle? The impious revellers might have been taken into custody that same night."

"Yes—yes—" the prince made haste to add, "why didn't you do that, instead of thinking it necessary to escape on a ship?"

"I believe I can explain my action to the satisfaction of the high-born gentlemen," deferentially responded the prisoner. "You will understand at once why I wanted to take a ship, when I tell you the name of the city. It was Stettin. It was in possession, at that time, of Gustavus Adolphus, whose heretic generals cared very little whether the Blessed Virgin or Baphomet were worshipped in the Catholic churches, which had already been desecrated more than once by themselves. Indeed, the relations between the knights and the heretics was most friendly, because the former had joined forces with the Swedes, and had fought bravely against the imperial beleaguerers. They were loyal comrades in arms with the heretics. That is why I deemed it wiser to escape from the city—"

"And you were right—quite right!" with unmistakable approval in his tone, commented the prince. "The Swedish heretics were not the proper authorities to settle so sacred and important a matter. The *furtum sacrosanctorum* may be stricken from the list of indictments."

"As may all that follow!" growled the mayor into his beard. "Now we shall hear how this innocent criminal disposes of the *homicidium!*

# PART V.

## THE HOMICIDE.

### CHAPTER I.

### ON BOARD MYNHEER'S SHIP.

A convincing proof of my honest and pious intentions is, that notwithstanding I was in great need of money—I hadn't a penny to my name!—it never occurred to me to help myself from the alms-box at the door of the chapel, which, at such seasons like Passion Week, was always well filled.

I had no "motive" to carry the box with me—it had not been defiled by sacrilegious hands.

I still wore the dress in which I had masqueraded as a lictor: the Roman balten, the leathern caliga, the chalizeh sandals with straps, and the ancient Hebrew pallium. Anywhere else in the civilized world a man garbed as I was would have been arrested as a vagabond lunatic; but I was not molested in Stettin.

That city, under Swedish domination, was a free port; the mouth of the Oder was crowded with vessels of all sorts, from all countries. The quay swarmed

with negroes, Spaniards, Turks, Chinese—all nationalities, all the costumes of the globe were represented. Consequently no one, however striking may have been his garb, would have attracted special attention. Nor did I, as I passed through the crowd in search of a vessel that was lifting her anchor, preparatory to sailing at once.

Chance led me to a Dutch ship.

The owner of the craft, Mynheer Ruissen, paid no attention to me until after we were out of the harbor, and were scudding before a favorable wind. Then, as he was passing along the deck, his eyes fell on me, where I was sitting near the rail, with my bag by my side.

He stopped in front of me, thrust his hands into the pockets of his coat, and, after a moment's close scrutiny, addressed me in a language I had never heard before. He tried several different tongues—oriental by their sound—with the same result. I could only indicate by shaking my head that I did not understand him. At last he became impatient, and exclaimed in Flemish:

"Potztausend-wetter! What language does this fellow speak, I wonder?"

I understood him then, and told him I could speak Dutch, and that I was not a heathen from the Orient, but a native of Europe, and a Christian like himself.

"And where are you going, may I ask?"

"Wherever your ship will take me," I answered.

"Have you the money to pay for your passage?"

"Not a solitary batz."

"Have you anything of value?"

"I have a beautiful golden flask set with precious gems, which I will give you as a pledge, or in payment —as you prefer."

"Did you come by it honestly?"

"I will take my oath that I did not steal it. A beautiful woman gave it to me as a souvenir. May I sink with this ship to the bottom of the sea, if every word I tell you is not true!"

"Na, Na,! you needn't mind swearing in that way," hastily interposed Mynheer. "I don't want my ship to go to the bottom of the sea! Is the flask worth enough to pay for your passage to Hamburg?"

"It would fetch more than your whole ship!"

He paused a moment, then asked again:

"What have you got in that bag?"

"Gold and silver vessels, and jewels."

"Are they souvenirs too? There, there, you needn't mind swearing again! I won't arrest you—it's no concern of mine how you came by them."

I told him then that if he would take me to his private cabin, I would tell him how I came to have the valuables in my possession.

He led me to his cabin, where he bade me place the leather bag in the corner. Then he ordered one mug of beer to be brought; filled a porcelain pipe—about the size of a thimble—with tobacco, thrust the stem between his lips, but did not light it—I dare say, because he feared it might burn out before he had emptied the beer mug, from which he took an occasional sip while I was telling him my story.

When I had told him of the scandalous scenes in the castle, and of my escape with the defiled vessels, which I had decided to take to the archbishop, Mynheer removed the pipe from his lips, deliberately knocked the tobacco into the palm of his hand and emptied it into the tobacco-pouch. Then he drained the last sip of beer from the mug, thrust his hands into his pockets and said:

"Well, my son, you have acted cleverly, and stupidly at the same time. To fetch the things away with you, was clever—very! But, to decide that you—by yourself—a poor unknown devil, would be believed by the archbishop, when you accused so powerful an order as the *Dornenritter* of blasphemy and sacrilege, was stupid in the extreme. Nobody will believe your story; you will be ridiculed, and told that you dreamed all these things."

"But," I interposed, "how could I have dreamed things no living being ever saw with his eyes, or heard with his ears? How could I have dreamed the Baphomet worship? How could I have dreamed names like Jaldabaoth and Ophïomorpho, and that disquisition around the sarcophagus?"

"Why, you stupid lad! Don't you see they will say you have been reading the secret pamphlet which was published by the opponents of the Ancient Order of Templars? But, what was permitted to King Philip will not be tolerated in you; you will not be allowed to tell stories about Baphomet idolatry, and serpent worship. And, suppose you are allowed to tell what you

'saw with your eyes and heard with your ears'—you have no witness to prove that what you say is true."

"Oh, haven't I?" I cried, triumphantly producing from the leather bag the pyx with its contents. "Here is my witness: this sacred wafer, defiled by the idol-worshippers. See! here in the center of it, is the print of Ashtoreth's slipper heel, where she trod it under foot. You see, it is directly over the banner of the *Agnus Dei?*"

Mynheer deliberately adjusted his large spectacles on the bridge of his nose, and scrutinized the wafer.

"*Donnerwetter!*" he growled, "you are right, lad, this is the symbol of Baphomet: a half-moon, a double-headed serpent curved to form the figure 8. Hm, hm—you have acted in a praiseworthy manner after all! By bringing this wafer with you, you have saved the souls of many devout Christians from eternal damnation, in that you have hindered them from kneeling in adoration today at mass before this symbol of Baphomet! Indeed, half Stettin will owe thanks to you if, instead of damnation, it wins salvation! Your brave and valiant deed will save from the flames of hell at least twelve thousand souls! Therein lies the wisdom of your action; the unwisdom will come to the fore when you ask yourself: 'What shall I do with these desecrated vessels?'

"You thought to arraign an entire order—nay, two, for those wanton females must belong to an order of some sort. To accuse a religious body is always extremely dangerous—specially so, if the order be composed of women. I am afraid it will result in your

ruin; you will most likely be arrested for stealing church property—the punishment for which is death at the stake. What will your word be worth against the denials of the knights? Do you imagine that any trace of their scandalous revelry will be found? Not by a good deal! You will be pronounced a wicked calumniator; unless you want them to cut off your tongue, you will keep it silent between your teeth!"

"Then what shall I do with these things?" I asked in perplexity, giving the bag a thrust with my foot. "Shall I take them back to the castle?—"

"That"—interrupted Mynheer—"would be the stupidest thing you could do. The sir knights would, beyond a doubt, have you walled into some corner of the castle, where you might await the resurrection with what patience you could summon!"

"Then, what would you advise me to do?" I asked again.

"Well, my son, *I* say, that what you have in your possession belongs to you; accept it as the gift of heaven—though you acquired it from Satan. When we get to Hamburg I will direct you where to find an honest man whose business it is to relieve pious folk of any treasure they may have taken from Satan—or, found where it was not lost. I am acquainted with a Christian of that sort; you need not be afraid to trust him—he is honest as a Quaker, and would not cheat anyone—on Sunday! I think I may trust you to dispose of your treasure as cleverly as you—appropriated it, which, after all, is the chief secret of trade!"

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MOO-CALF.

I dare say your highness, and gentlemen of the court, have heard a good many stories about the moo-calf? I shall abstain from expressing just here an opinion of the mysterious creature as, by so doing, I should anticipate the denouement of one of my most remarkable adventures. I think almost every dweller in Coblentz has heard of the moo-calf's strange doings; for there are numerous records in the chronicles of the city, of its mysterious appearance and behavior.

The moo-calf ordinarily appears in those cities where the Jews have multiplied excessively, and attained to power.

It is a well-known fact that a calf is the meekest, the most innocent of animals, that it has never been known to assault anyone, that it would be the least likely of all the animal kingdom to wield a boundless tyranny over an entire community. Therefore, I do not believe *all* the terrifying tales I have heard about the moo-calf. Do any of the gentlemen here believe them?

Several members of the court admitted that they believed the tales; some thought a portion might be true, others were non-committal. So much time was given to the discussion, that the chair was at last

obliged to interfere. He said to the prisoner—after rapping impatiently for order:

"You are not here to ask questions, but to be questioned. Now let us hear what *you* have to say about the moo-calf?"

Hugo bowed and resumed his confession:

When we arrived at Hamburg, Mynheer so managed matters, that it was evening when he and I went ashore. With the bag of valuables on my back, I tramped after him to the suburb of St. Paul, to seek in the winding, and zig-zag streets of the "Hamberger Berg," the house of the honest Christian, who would relieve my back, and incidentally my mind, of the load of treasure.

We pushed our way with whole skins through a confusion of menagerie booths, puppet-shows, jugglery and rope-dancing exhibitions, which their proprietors importuned us to patronize, avoided with some difficulty the crowds of tipsy sailors, and at last arrived in front of the house we were seeking.

The name of the owner was Meyer—a by no means rare cognomen in Germany!

He was a Lutheran, as eleven-twelfths of the residents of Hamburg are. They alone possess the rights of citizenship.

Mynheer Ruissen took Herr Meyer to one side, and communicated to him what business had brought me to Hamburg, whereupon Herr Meyer without further ceremony invited me to sup with him.

"I hope"—here impatiently interrupted the chair—"you don't intend to waste more of our time by an

enumeration and description of the various dishes you partook of?"

"No, your honor, though it would not take long to tell what we had for supper. Herr Meyer placed before me nothing but bread, cheese and water. He could not say enough in praise of the bread and cheese, and he boasted that the water, which he said was from the Elias fountain, possessed the most remarkable properties. While I ate, he examined in turn each of the vessels I had taken from the bag and placed on the table, exclaiming over every piece, and making a peculiar noise with his tongue against the inside of his upper teeth:

"A baptismal basin! Tse-tse-tse! How could you dare to take this? A censer! tse-tse-tse! Young man, did it never occur to you that you were defying Satan when you put this into your bag? A communion-cup! tse-tse-tse! I should think your soul would be oppressed with its weight of sin! And—actually!—the Holy Virgin's diadem! Woe-woe-woe, to you, miserable sinner!" I could listen no longer to his lugubrious comments:

"Oh, hush, Master Meyer," I interrupted, "what use to talk like that? You needn't think to frighten me with your lamentations. I am a Lutheran like yourself—rather let us talk about the value of these things: What will you give for the whole lot? But, before we talk business, bring me something more palatable to eat and drink. Your bread and cheese and water are not to my taste."

"Very good, you shall have something else," with

sudden alacrity responded Master Meyer, whose opinion of me was evidently improving. He hurried to the kitchen, and soon returned with some salt fish, and a jug of good cider, which he placed before me.

Then he proceeded to appraise the church vessels, and the diadem, telling me the while that I ought to be thankful his dear old friend Mynheer Ruissen had led me to him. How easily I might have fallen into the hands of the papists, who would certainly have imprisoned me—and perhaps put me to death; or into those of the Jews, who had swarmed from Spain into Hamburg, and were ruining all honest tradesmen. The rascally Hebrews would offer only ridiculously low prices for articles they suspected had been acquired by means not altogether legitimate, and would give in payment for them counterfeit money. And, wasn't the cod-fish I was eating most appetizing?

After he had examined my treasures two or three times, he said he would give me six hundred thalers for the lot—and that I might drink all of the cider into the bargain.

"See here, Master Meyer," I replied, "your fish is so salty it makes one want to drink continually, and your cider is so sour, I would rather not eat your fish than to have to quench my thirst with the cider. And, moreover, I will take my treasures to the Jews' quarter, where I shall no doubt find some one who will give more than a paltry six hundred thalers to a poor shipwrecked traveller for a lot of articles that are worth at least twenty times the sum you offer."

At these words my worthy host beat his hands together above his head, and exclaimed:

"My dear son! how will you find your way to the Jews' quarter at this late hour? It would be very unwise—nay, dangerous, for you to attempt it. Don't you know that the moo-calf makes its appearance about this time?"

I shrugged my shoulders to indicate that I was not afraid of a moo-calf.

"But, my dear son, you don't know what a terrible creature the moo-calf is. It has become even more terrible and ferocious since the Jews have multiplied to such numbers in Hamburg. These Spanish Jews understand all sorts of witch-craft. It was they who discovered that if a young calf is fed on human blood instead of milk, it will become savage as a lion. This is the sort of moo-calf they have turned loose in the Hamberger Berg. It roams through the streets at night, terrifying to death every person it meets, and scatters the watchmen in all directions. It tears the bells from the house doors; it has teeth so sharp that it can snap off the pole of a halberd as easily as if it were a pipe-stem; and its tongue is rough as a cloth-shearer's brush. It roars like a lion, bellows like a wild bull, snorts like a whole herd of wild horses; clatters through the streets like a luggage van, clappers like a fulling-mill, and crows like a cock that is possessed. It takes special delight in pursuing honest men and fathers of families, who suspect their wives and daughters of adventure, and if it chances to catch one of them, *he* will not very soon forget the moo-calf—that

is if he escapes with his head to remember it! Another favorite trick with the calf is: to steal upon a pair of lovers, and roar at them with such a terrible voice that they die of fright—"

"And what sort of looking beast is this moo-calf?" I interrupted.

"Why, no one can tell what it looks like, my son. Those who have been unfortunate enough to encounter it on the street have had a stream of fire blown into their eyes from the beast's nostrils, and they were not able to see for weeks afterward. The man who is brave enough to thrust his head out the window when he hears the moo-calf bellow, will be sure to regret his curiosity, for his head will swell to such a size that he will not be able for several days to get it back through the window. That is why no one is able to tell what the monster is like. I only know that it has the power to stretch its neck to such a length that it can look into the upper windows of a house. Oh, I can assure you, it is a most horrible creature!"

I had had ample time, while he was descanting on the moo-calf's terrible doings, to replace my treasures in the bag.

"Then there really is such a monster?" I observed, shouldering my load.

He swore by all he held dear, that the moo-calf not only existed, but that it roamed the streets of Hamburg almost every night.

"Have you any desire to make a bet with me?" I asked.

"A bet?—on what?"

"That I can eat a whole calf at a sitting—especially when I have a ravenous appetite as now. Fetch me your moo-calf and I'll devour him, hoofs, hide and tail!"

I dropped the bag from my shoulder to the table, drew forth the short Roman sword, which was part of my lictor's costume, and sharpened it on the steel.

"Now, fetch on your moo-calf," I repeated, again shouldering the bag and making as if I were going to quit the house.

"And you really are not afraid of the moo-calf?" exclaimed Master Meyer, placing himself in front of me, believing I intended to pursue my way. "I see you are a headstrong lad, but, as I have taken a fancy to you, I don't want you to run any risks. Come, make up your mind to stop here until morning. We will agree on a price for your treasures; and then have supper together."

"No, thanks," I returned, my face still toward the street door. "I don't want any more dried codfish. The season of fasting is over—besides, I am no priest, and if I were I shouldn't object to wine."

"You shall have whatever you want, my son. Put down your bag, and make yourself at home." And he hurried into the kitchen to give his orders.

After several minutes he returned, clad in an entire suit of new clothes; on his arm he carried another handsome suit, which he begged me to accept as a present from him, adding that I would find in the pocket of the coat in a purse the sum he was willing to

pay for my treasures, and with which he knew I would be quite satisfied.

When I opened the purse I found in it fifty doubloons, and a slip of paper.

"What is this?" I inquired, holding the paper toward him.

"A promissory note for two-thousand thalers, payable in three months."

I knew very well that a note of hand was as good as money, and was quite satisfied with the trade—only, the time of payment was too long distant to suit me.

"It is a Hamburg custom, my son," replied Master Meyer when I mentioned my objections. "The money must have time to mature."

I was obliged to be satisfied, besides, fifty doubloons would be quite enough to keep me in food and raiment for three months.

The supper Master Meyer now placed before me was of a sort I would not have believed his larder capable of supplying—judging from the fare he had offered me first. There were pasties of all sorts, game, confections and a choice selection of wines. Of the last I took special care not to imbibe too freely. Master Meyer's family joined us at the repast; there were three daughters, comely, and of marriageable age; and a son. The latter, I was informed, was a student at the university. I thought him rather advanced in years for a student!

There was not the least resemblance between the three young women; no one would have taken them

to be sisters. They were merry creatures, sang and played on the harp and the guitar.

One of them, a blonde, was very pretty. I noticed that she stole frequent glances toward me, and when her eyes met mine she would blush and smile enchantingly.

I was still young, and not at all averse to a flirtation. Moreover, I was a widower. I had had enough experience with the fairer sex, however, to teach me that it would be well to be on my guard.

Master Meyer had introduced me to his family as "Junker Hermann." The blonde daughter's name was Agnes. She was a sentimental and romantic maid. I sat by her side at supper, and was so flustered by the glances from her blue eyes, I could think of nothing more sensible to say to her than: "that when the dear Lord should bestow on me a family, I would have just such spoons as her father's"—with which we were eating the chocolate cream—and that my own and my wife's crests should be engraved on the handles. This remark led me to observe further that I thought the initial letters of Hermann and Agnes would form a pretty monogram. My fair neighbor could not see just how the letters might be arranged. I told her it was very simple: the A need only be inserted between the two uprights of the H to make the union perfect.

I wanted the Meyers to believe that I was a genuine cavalier, so I said to the father—after I had emptied my third glass of wine:

"That ring on your finger pleases me very much. I should like to buy it."

"Well, you see, Junker Hermann," he returned slowly, turning the ring on his finger, "this is a costly piece of jewelry. The carbuncle alone is worth fifty thalers; besides, the ring is an heirloom. I wouldn't sell it for seventy thalers."

"Would you sell it for eighty?"

"I wouldn't let anyone but you, Junker Hermann, have it at any price! As you seem to have taken such a fancy to it, then take it, in God's name, for eighty thalers."

"All right," said I. "Just keep the eighty thalers out of the two-thousand you owe me

At mention of the two-thousand thalers Agnes helped me to a second dish of chocolate cream.

"I will draw up a note for the amount," said her father. "We are only human, and no one can tell what may happen to me."

"Write whatever you like and I'll scrawl my signature to it," I replied disdainfully.

When he had quitted the room, Agnes whispered to me:

"I am very sorry father sold his ring. It is a talisman in our family, and was given to my mother as a wedding-present."

"And suppose"—I whispered back to her—"my buying it does not take it out of the family?"

"I don't quite understand you," she replied, casting down her eyes, and blushing.

"I shall make my meaning clearer when I may speak to you alone."

"That can be arranged very easily, Junker Hermann; when the family have gone to their rooms for the night, we can meet in the bow-window chamber—then you can tell me what you have to say."

The father now returned with the note to the dining-room. It was for one-hundred thalers, that being the sum—principal and interest—I should owe Master Meyer at the expiration of three months.

I did not think it worth while to waste words over the usurious interest charged; but signed my name with cavalier *sangfroid*, and the ring was transferred from Master Meyer's hand to my own. As my hand was considerably larger than his, which was exceedingly thin and bony, I could only get the ring on the second joint of my little finger.

Just at that moment Rupert, the elderly student, must have made a teasing remark to his sister; for the three at once set upon him, and began to belabor him with their fists, and cry out that he should not have any more wine that evening.

"Very well," he exclaimed, laughing, "then I'll go to the tavern and get some."

He invited me to accompany him; saying that we should find at the tavern some good company and bad wine. I excused myself on the plea that I was very tired, and wanted to rest. He departed alone, and we heard him singing, and knocking against the doors with his stick, as he staggered down the street.

Good-nights were now exchanged, and each one went to his or her room. I waited with considerable impatience until the house had become quiet; then I

stole on tip-toe to the bow-window chamber. This apartment is in the top story of the house, and projects several feet over the street. A bright moon illumined the cozy chamber, so that a lamp was not necessary.

I had not long to wait; the soft rustle of feminine garments very soon announced the coming of my charming Agnes.

I met her at the door, took her hand in mine, and drew her into the bow-window. She asked me without further ceremony, to explain how the ring I had bought from her father could remain in their family now that I was the owner of it.

"Nothing easier in the world! my dear Agnes," I made answer. "I need only to slip it on your finger as an engagement ring."

She understood my explanation, and allowed me to place on the third finger of her left hand the ring for which I owed one-hundred thalers. After this ceremony I asked—as was natural—if I might seal the bargain with a kiss—"

"Ha! I knew that was coming!" interrupted the chair; "we don't care to hear that sort of evidence."

"Why," pacifically interposed the prince. "Why, a kiss is nothing out of the way."

"*One* kiss would not be; but it would not stop at one; a second and a third—and heaven only knows how many more would follow, and—"

"Pray allow me to contradict your honor," respectfully interrupted the prisoner. "There was only one. I will admit that I was about to help myself to more, but I was hindered—"

"By the white dove on your shoulder, of course!" interrupted the mayor's ironical tones.

"No, your honor, not the white dove. Just at the moment I was going to take the second kiss, there came from the street directly underneath the bow-window, the most unearthly sounds—as if a herd of angry elephants were bellowing for their supper. I never heard so hideous a noise. It was a mixture of the squealing of a wild boar; the neighing of a horse; the blare of a trumpet, and the clattering of a heavy wagon over cobbles."

"Jesu Maria! the moo-calf!" shrieked my terror-stricken betrothed, tearing herself from my arms. The next instant she had vanished, with my hundred-thaler ring.

Furious with rage, and not a little fear, I sprang to the window, flung back the sash, and thrust out my head—never once thinking of the dire result which would follow such action: my head swollen to the size of a barrel.

However, that did not happen to me; but enough pepper was blown into my eyes to prevent me, most effectually, from seeing anything on the earth, or in the heaven! I howled with pain and rage—compared to the sounds which came from my throat, the moo-calf's bellowing was the weakly puling of an infant.

But, such was the fear of my host and his daughters, of the fiendish brute, that not one of them ventured to come to my assistance. I was obliged to grope my way unaided to my room, and to wash the pepper from my blinded eyes as best I could.

While I was thus engaged Rupert returned home, and joined his howls to mine; he said the moo-calf had attacked him, and almost done for him. His face and clothes were proof of a rough and tumble encounter with something: the former was scratched and bleeding, and his garments looked as though he had had a scuffle with an enraged eagle. His bed and mine were in the same room, and neither of us slept very much that night. The student was frightfully ill; he kept muttering constantly something about the moo-calf; while I sat by the basin until daylight, mopping my eyes with water.

The cursed moo-calf! Why didn't he bellow before I gave my costly ring into Agnes' keeping? It was not at all likely that I should soon have another opportunity to be alone with her!

The next morning Master Meyer gave me to understand that the duties of hospitality would not be extended beyond one day; and that I would better seek a lodging more suitable to the station of a young man of quality. He would be glad to have me visit him frequently; and if I wanted to be amused Rupert, who was perfectly familiar with all the ways of the city, would be delighted to be my guide.

I did not see the lovely Agnes again alone; so I made up my mind to write, and tell her how much I thought of her. I question now, whether any of the numerous letters I sent her through Rupert, ever reached her hands.

From that day, there was no end to amusements. Rupert was the very lad to make me acquainted in

the shortest time with all the resorts of entertainment, and many companions of questionable reputation. I was introduced to a Spanish hidalgo; a Scotch laird; a Brazilian planter; a Wallachian boyar—that their patents of nobility grew on the same geneological tree with my own I suspected from the very first. They were, individually and collectively, hearty drinkers, reckless gamblers, and fearless fighters. That the money they squandered with lavish hand was not obtained through honest means I was confident, and I was equally confident that the entire crew looked on me as their own special prey.

But, I taught them a thing or two before very long!

At our drinking-bouts, I always left them under the table. While with the Templars I learned a valuable secret: how to drink all the wine you wanted without becoming intoxicated. I shall not reveal this most valuable secret here. I have an idea, that when the court sentences me, I may win its clemency by revealing what I learned from the *dornenritter*—the secret which would be of incalculable value to all mankind—

"We shall see about it—if the time ever comes when sentence shall be passed on you!" observed the chair.

To out-drink me, resumed the prisoner, after this digression, was impossible, though they tried their best to do so. Had they succeeded in stupefying me with wine, I am quite certain they would have robbed me of the note for two-thousand thalers, which I always carried with me. I suspected that the series of drinking-bouts had been arranged to enable Rupert to steal the note; had he succeeded, Master Meyer

would have been relieved of paying what he owed me. But my secret enabled me to frustrate their plans.

Nor did they succeed in getting hold of any of my doubloons. The first time we engaged in a game of dice, I detected their scheme to cheat me; the dice were loaded. As I had played that sort of game before, I astonished and discomfited my companions by the frequency with which the sixes always came on top when I threw. They, and not I, lost money. If they attempted to quarrel with me about my good fortune, they found that, skilled though they were in the pugilistic art, I could take care of myself. I learned some wrestling tricks while I was with the haidemaken, and they served me well in my bouts with those notorious fighting-cocks. I was not the one to get worsted. But, no matter how angry I might be, I always took good care not to injure any of them seriously; had I done so, they would very soon have had me behind prison bars.

I was also extremely careful in my intercourse with the women I met. My white dove accompanied me wherever I went, but I never spoke of her to anyone. I would tell my companions, after they had dragged me from one den to another without succeeding in attaching me to any of the alluring nymphs, that I had no eyes for any woman but my charming betrothed, to whom I had vowed eternal fidelity; and that I was obliged to adhere all the more rigidly to my vow, because Rupert, being the brother of my sweetheart, might betray me to her were he to see me paying attention to another girl.

Then the student would swear that a "whole ditch full of devils" might fetch him (a favorite oath in Hamberger Berg polite society) if he so much as mentioned my name to his sister. I might flirt with whomsoever I chose, he would not betray me. But, I persisted in turning a deaf ear to the fascinating damsels I continued to meet night after night in the various drinking shops we frequented. I knew very well that a tidy wench would be more apt to get hold of my carefully guarded note of hand than would any of my brawling comrades.

I wasn't going to let anyone steal it; I had decided that I would take the money home to my poor old parents. The two-thousand thalers would make of them real gentle folk; father could buy a little fruit farm; and a fur coat for himself; and the old mother might promenade to church in a silk mantle, bought with the money her son had given her—"

"And which he obtained by selling stolen church property," sarcastically interjected the chair.

"The end justified the means," quickly, but with due respect, retorted the prisoner, whereupon the prince laughed heartily.

The mayor's face became crimson; he said in a tone of reprimand: "That phrase was not devised by the pious Jesuits to excuse the man who steals church property, and sells it to obtain money for his family. The prisoner will continue his confession."

In this manner I passed three months. The day before the one on which my note fell due, I spent in my lodgings sleeping quietly. That night I accompanied

my friends, as usual, on a round of the different taverns we were wont to frequent. We scattered the night patrol; smeared the windows of several professors' houses with wagon grease; sang rollicking ditties in front of the houses in which we knew there were pretty girls; belabored all the Jews we found abroad at that hour, and kept the entire "Berg" in a state of excitement, until long after midnight. We marched arm in arm, forming a line across the street that reached from house to house, to the "Three Apples"—a famous tavern at that time—where, for a wager, we drank all the liquid medicines in the store of an itinerant quack doctor, who had stopped there for the night.

It is just possible it was the medicaments that confused my brain—though I am convinced they were perfectly innocent of any intoxicants. Rupert became so helpless, he lay like a log on the tap-room floor; the innkeeper ordered the rest of us out of the house.

As it was too early to go home, the Scotchman suggested that, as Rupert was not with us, we should go around to Master Meyer's, where he and the rest would keep watch in the street, while I made a "window-call" on my betrothed.

"That's a bright idea of yours!" I exclaimed. "How am I to get up to my pretty Agnes' window? Her room is in the top story, in the gable. I am not a moo-calf that can stretch its neck to the luthern."

"Why are we your friends?" chivalrously demanded the Spanish hidalgo. "Are not we here to help you? We will form a pyramid: three of us will support two others on their shoulders, and you will form the apex.

You can then rap at your lady-love's window, and we will remain immovable, while you exchange kisses with her."

The quack's medicaments had, as I said before, confused my brain; I agreed to the silly plan suggested by the hidalgo, and we turned our unsteady steps toward the Meyer residence.

When we arrived in front of the house, the first thing we did was break the lantern which swung from a rope stretched across the street, in order that the darkness might screen us from the sight of passers-by.

The acrobatic feat of building a human pyramid was easily accomplished; and I was very soon standing on the shoulders of two comrades whose feet in turn rested on the shoulders of the three forming the base.

I had no difficulty in reaching to the sill of the bow-window; that room, I knew, opened into Agnes' sleeping-chamber. I had rapped once on the glass—cautiously, for I did not want to rouse any one in the lower rooms; and was about to repeat the knock, when the fiendish bellowing I had heard once before made the blood run cold in my veins.

My comrades under me cried out in terror:

"The moo-calf is coming!"—and the next instant I was hanging by my fingers to the sill of the bow-window, with my legs wriggling like those of a frog caught on a hook. I could hear my valiant comrades scampering for their lives down the street. I did not want to call for help; for, if old Meyer saw me dangling in front of his window, he would believe me to be a burglar, and shoot me without ceremony. I could not

swing myself up to the window-sill, for the sash was closed; so, I hung there, and tried in vain to find a projection below me, on which to rest my toes.

Meanwhile, the bellowing monster came nearer; I could already hear it snorting under me. I hung motionless as an executed criminal on the gallows, hoping the calf might not notice me.

It was a vain hope! The brute came directly toward me, and when I looked down, I saw the hideous horned head stretch upward—nearer, nearer. I could feel the rough tongue lick the soles of my shoes—then my ankles. I drew up my knees, and lifted myself as high as I could; but the elastic neck stretched out longer—the horrible tongue licked higher. I felt as if my trousers were being brushed with a curry-comb, and I thought to myself every moment: "Now the devil will seize me!"

I wriggled and kicked in vain—nearer, and nearer, came the long horns which threatened to spit me on their sharp points. Fiendish laughter seemed to come from the red throat, as the tongue licked higher and higher. It reached my thighs—then my waist, and before I could guess what might happen, the little bag hanging from my belt, in which I carried the note for two-thousand thalers, was snapped from its chain, and disappeared down the brute's gullet.

My fear vanished with the note. Not even Satan himself should take it without a struggle!

Heedless of the moo-calf, as well as of the danger to my legs, I let go my hold on the window-sill and dropped. Fortunately my mantle carried me like a

parachute through the air, so that I was not even shaken by a too sudden contact with the pavement.

I now stood face to face with the dreaded moo-calf. It was not a creation of the imagination, but a veritable monster, and a most hideous and frightful one too, at that! It had four huge legs and feet like an elephant; a neck two fathoms long, at the end of it an enormous head with horns; the long red tongue hanging from the open jaws was covered with scales shaped like saw teeth.

"You may be the devil himself," I cried, drawing my sword, and stepping up to the monster, "but you must give me back my purse."

Quick as thought, the long neck was drawn in, and the head thrust at me with a force that sent me staggering backward several feet. A faint-hearted man would most likely have taken to his heels, but I was too enraged at my loss to think of seeking safety in flight.

What! had I purloined the *dornenritter* treasures for this?

*They* were now in Master Meyer's possession, and the two-thousand thalers were in the stomach of this moo-calf! All this passed like lightning through my brain, as I picked myself up from the pavement, where the brute had flung me, and again approached him.

"Either you take me with you to hell," I exclaimed hoarsely, "or I'll tear my purse from your entrails!"

Again the monster drew in his neck, spread his legs apart as if to brace himself, and gave utterance to another marrow-freezing roar. I remembered the dose of pepper I had received from him, and held the corner

of my mantle in front of my face; this shielded me also from the sparks of fire he blew from his nostrils.

I was prepared for the second assault, and when the brute again shot out his head toward me, I dropped nimbly to the pavement, and the head swept over me into the empty air. Before it could be drawn back, I was on my feet, and buried my sword to the hilt in the creature's breast.

What was my surprise and horror to hear a despairing moan—not from the moo-calf's throat, from its belly—an unmistakably human voice.

"I am killed—murdered!" cried the voice, as the moo-calf fell in a heap to the pavement; and from the shapeless leather envelope staggered a human form—my comrade, Rupert, the student.

The blood was spurting from a wound in his breast—my sword had pierced clean through him!

"So, you are the moo-calf?" I exclaimed in amazement, surveying the wounded man leaning, gasping for breath, against the door of his father's house.

"The devil take you," he groaned. "Why didn't I kill you at once, when you were hanging from the window, instead of fooling with you? Now, the old man may play the moo-calf himself, and scare customers from the Jews' quarter! It's all up with me! Ho, Agnes! Mettze! Come quick! Summon the patrol! Sound an alarm!"

I saw a female form appear in the bow-window. It was Agnes. When she recognized Rupert's voice, she began to shriek "Murder! murder!"

I turned to fly, but Rupert, who had sunk to the

pavement, weak from the loss of blood, seized hold of my leg—even in death he thought only of revenge! I jerked my leg from his grasp with such force, that he fell backward, striking his head against the door-post.

He did not stir again.

I did not stop to search in the skin of the moo-calf for the promissory note; I took only time enough to catch up a handful of mud from the street, and fling it into the face of the girl, who was leaning from the window shrieking "Murder!" into the night.

It silenced her for a few moments, and I fled down the street with strides that soon took me a considerable distance from the scene of the tragedy.

In my terror I imagined that a multitude was pursuing me, crying: "Catch him!" "Hold him!" "There goes the assassin!"

I fled through unfamiliar streets and by-ways, across bridges, to the outskirts of the city. There I saw, in an underground den, lights and moving forms; and heard dance-music and riotous shouting. I tore open the entrance-door, dashed down the steps, and fell into the arms of an overgrown rascal, who was clad in the uniform of the Munster guards. The fellow locked his arms about me, and said laughingly:

"You are welcome, comrade! You have come to the proper refuge. You must have been close pressed, I declare! You are puffing like a porpoise! But, have no further fear—you are safe now. Come, sit and have something to drink."

He pressed a goblet of wine into my hand, thrust his arm through mine, and drank *smollis* with me, by exchanging his bear-skin hat for my cloth barret-cap.

"There, my son, now you are one of us. You have drank our wine, and are now under the command of our worthy captain."

I had stumbled upon a body of recruits for a partisan corps. The company was made up of desperate characters, who were glad enough of this chance to escape prison, or the gallows.

As for myself, I was forced to put a good face on a bad business! Only twelve hours before, I had been a distinguished cavalier, was called Junker Hermann; and had a promissory note for two-thousand thalers in my pocket. Now, I had neither station nor money, and as I had good cause for not wanting to keep the name by which I was known in Hamburg, I gave the recruiting sergeant my own true patronymic.

After I had been properly registered, I asked the sergeant:

"What is the name of our captain?"

"Meyer."

"There are a good many Meyers in the world. Is the captain related to the Berg-Meyers?"

"You've guessed it the first time, my son! The captain's father lives in the Hamberger Berg, and is a well-known receiver of stolen goods. Rupert, the captain's brother, is a pander."

I dare say many a man in my place would have been frightened at this discovery; but *I* congratulated myself! If I were pursued—I argued—the officers of justice would seek for me everywhere else but in the company commanded by the brother of the murdered man; and if Captain Meyer ever discovered that it was

I who had relieved him of the brother with whom he would have been obliged to share his inheritance, *he* certainly would not reproach me for it!

This, honored and high-born gentlemen, added Hugo in conclusion, is the true history of the homicide for which I am arraigned. I have not added to, or taken from it; but have related the events exactly as they occurred.

"*Que bene distinguit, bene docet!*" observed the prince thoughtfully. "We call it murder, when the person committing the deed strikes what he knows to be a human being. But, if the man encounters a ferocious monster that he believes to be a moo-calf, and kills it as such, and it turns out to be a human being, 'murder' is certainly not the term to apply to the deed. Moreover, the person who is so devoid of sense and dignity, as to conceal his human form in the hide of an irrational beast, is himself responsible for whatever may happen to him! Therefore, this indictment may also be stricken from the register."

"Perhaps, your highness," observed the chair with a covert sneer, "would like to suggest a reward for the prisoner, for delivering the city of Hamburg from the terrorism of the moo-calf?"

The prince's reply made it obvious that he had not noticed the chair's sarcasm:

"I-think-not," he returned slowly. "As the prisoner is likely to be condemned to death for one or more of the other crimes, it would be useless to bestow on him a certainly deserved reward."

A further hearing was postponed until the next morning.

# PART VI.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE FORGERY.—ONE CIPHER.

I passed an entire year under the command of Captain Meyer, during which time I may say I committed no more—nor less, evil than my comrades. I do not hold it necessary to mention the seven mortal sins, of which all soldiers are guilty when in the enemy's country—those sins become virtues then.

Were I to enumerate the pillaging, homicides, conflagrations, in which I took active part, it would be rather a *captatis benevolentiæ* than an enforced confession. This much, however, I will confess: The regions visited by Captain Meyer's corps never expressed a desire for our return. A whole year of such a life was quite enough for me; and, as I had enlisted for only a twelve-month, at the expiration of that time I asked for my discharge.

The captain expressed regret at my wanting to leave him; but made no objection when I gave him my reason for quitting the service; I was home-sick, and wanted to see my poor old mother and father. The old folks lived in Andernach, near which we were

quartered. I had not seen them for full ten years; and I decided that I would spend the rest of my days with them.

The gold and silver I had once counted on taking to them, to solace their old age, was not now in my possession: Satan, through whose aid I had obtained it, had taken it away from me again.

But, if I could not give my parents curse-laden wealth, I was able to offer them two strong and willing arms which, after so many years of sinful struggling, longed for the honest toil that would call down a blessing from heaven.

I would adopt my father's trade; become a pious believer, and try to be of some use to my fellow-creatures.

Before I could do this, however, I should be obliged to commit a forgery—as the world would call it.

The burgomaster of Andernach, and the manager of the tannery in that place, were so very scrupulous, that they wanted to know all about my antecedents, before they would consent to receive me as a citizen, and journeyman.

Not for the world would I have forged an entire testimonial for honesty, and respectability; but I did not think, that to add a single cipher to the honorable discharge I had received from Captain Meyer was anything out of the way. A tiny, innocent, worth-nothing, insignificent cipher, that could harm no one, take nothing from anyone! And I did not place it in front of the figure 1 either—thus giving it the precedence over the more valuable numeral. If the honorable and

high-born gentlemen will but look at it from a different point of view from that usually taken, I feel confident they will not think my transgression so heinous after all. Heaven knows! *Ten* years' service under Captain Meyer contained sufficient torture to purge the most hardened criminal, and make him fit for citizenship in any respectable community!

This, your highness, and honorable gentlemen, is the forgery to which I plead guilty.

"Humph!" ejaculated his highness. "It is not worth mentioning! Who would take the trouble to notice such a trifle? Proceed to the indictment next on the list—"

"On which there is still another crime less!" grumbled the chair impatiently.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE LEGACY.

Discharged soldiers travel on foot. It is the more expeditious way if the roads are bad, for a wagon is heavier than a man. The man has only two feet to draw from the mud; while the wagon has four wheels. Besides to travel on foot is cheaper.

When I arrived in Andernach I had, remaining from the money I had saved during my year's campaigning, only one thaler; but my heart was so light, the lightness of my pocket did not trouble me.

How glad I was when I caught sight of the familiar towers of the palace, and the ruins on the Templeberg. How often, when a lad, I had clambered among those ruins, in search of hawks' nests, and Roman coins. If I had only broken my neck on one of those innocent quests. Everything was so familiar; the large millstone factory; the cranes on the quay; the rafts on the river; the long avenues—yes, even the old receivers of customs at the Coblentz gate! I recognized the old fellows at once; but they did not remember me. I might stray through the entire town without hearing a single voice call to me: "Welcome, welcome! Why that is Hugo!" I was so changed in appearance!

But I remembered everybody and everything! I did not need to ask my way through the narrow streets to

the tanneries on the banks of the river. I remembered the names of all the families that lived in those narrow streets.

At last I came in sight of the house in which dwelt my parents—the dear, familiar home of my boyhood! There it stood; and beside it, the same tall mulberry tree with its branches shading the street.

Perched among those branches, I had learned to decline the classical formula: *"Hic gallus cantans in arbore sedens, kukuriku dicens!"* At the moment of my arrival, however, instead of a *gallus cantans* on the tree, an auctioneer's assistant was standing under it, and vigorously beating a cracked drum.

"What is going on here?" I asked of the man, in whom I recognized an acquaintance of my boyhood.

"There's going to be an auction, Master Soldier."

"What is to be sold?"

"Everything that belonged to the old tanner. You may take a look inside if you like," he added, nodding toward the house. "It won't cost you anything."

"But why are you selling the old man's property?" I asked again.

"To get money, naturally!"

"For whom?"

"For the numerous Jebucees, Sadducees, and publicans, to whom the old man was indebted. If they sell everything—to the brood of sparrows under the eaves! —there will not be enough money, by a good deal, to pay all he owes."

"Why," said I, "the old man was a good manager;

and his wife an industrious and thrifty house-wife, when I knew them."

"And so they were! The old man was all right, until he took to drinking."

"Took to drinking? Why did he do that?"

"Well—you see, he had a worthless son, who ran away from home about ten years ago. The scamp joined a band of robbers; and when he left them, he gave out that he was a Polish count; played all manner of tricks; broke out of prison; robbed churches. Every year the news which came to the old man about his Hugo grew worse; until at last he was afraid to venture on the street, for the whole town was talking about his worthless son. So he took to drink—had it fetched to the house, and drank harder and harder—especially after his wife died—"

"Dead?" I interrupted. "Is the old dame dead?" my heart almost burst because I had to keep back the words "my mother."

"Yes, Master Soldier, she is dead, and it is a mercy the good old soul did not live to see this sorrowful day! But, you must excuse me. I have got to beat this drum, so that a good lot of people will come to the sale."

A dozen or more purchasers came in response to the summons. I took up my station by the open window, and looked into the familiar room, where the buyers were higgling over the various articles to be sold. My mother's Sunday mantle was just then under the hammer—the pretty silk mantle with the silver fastening at the neck. How I wished I were able to put

an end to the disgusting higgling, by shouting in the window:

"I'll take the whole lot for a thousand thalers!"

But, alas! there was only a single, miserable thaler in my pocket.

The mantle at last became the property of an old-clothes dealer: he flung it around his shoulders, and made believe to promenade to church. It was a revolting sight! The entire higgling crew laughed uproariously, and clapped their hands. I could endure it no longer, my heart was bursting.

I stepped back to the drummer, and asked:

"Is it long since the old dame died?"

"Not so long but you may find her grave if you care to see it. She is buried in the cemetery on the Templeberg."

"And where is her husband?"

"Well"—and he scratched his ear—"that is a question I am unable to answer: what was immortal about him, is in heaven, or hell, or purgatory—who can say? Flesh, bones and skin, are about to be buried in the earth—just where though, I can't tell you."

"Buried now?" I repeated. "Why, there's no bell tolling for the funeral?"

"No, Master Soldier, the death bell doesn't ring for such corpses. The poor old man hung himself—just here, on this limb above us!"

"Hung himself?" I repeated in horror.

"Yes, Master Soldier—he hung himself on that limb! You see he couldn't stand it when, after he had been told that his property would have to be sold to pay his

debts, he heard that the burgomaster had received from Hamburg a warrant to arrest Hugo, his vagabond son, who had murdered a comrade of his in that city."

You may imagine my feeling when I heard these words! They banished from my mind all thought of making myself known as the long-lost Hugo, and the determination to keep my identity a strict secret was strengthened by the drummer who, at every beat he inflicted on the cracked calf-skin, exclaimed: "The rascal!" "The vagabond!" "The gallows-bird!" and similar titles of honor!

I deemed it wise to join him in execrating the reprobate, whose evil conduct had forced the honest old tanner to end his life on the green branch over our heads.

The bloody deed I had committed in Hamburg had driven my poor father to a suicide's grave. I could listen no longer to the monotonous drum-beats, and the call which came from the house: "Who bids higher?"

I stole away from the house to which I had brought disgrace and death. I stole away to that city of the silent multitude, where there is no higgling, no outbidding, no "who bids higher?"

Here, the wooden cross at the head of the grass-grown mound of earth, serves the same purpose, and serves it as well as the majestic marble monument. After a long search among many familiar, and some unfamiliar names, I found, on one of the wooden crosses, the name to which I had a claim.

Underneath that mound, bare of green sod, with no mourning wreath of never-fading flowers adorning the cross, rested the woman who had left behind her on earth nothing but a drunken husband, who drank to forget his shame; and a worthless son, whose name was a public disgrace in every city in the land

I flung myself beside the mound. I dared not give vent to my sorrow in moans and tears, for fear a grave-digger, or some passer-by might hear me, and suspect me to be the son of the woman in the grave.

The Hamburg magistrates had offered one hundred thalers for my arrest; consequently it behooved me to be very cautious. I pretended I had chosen that spot to rest; and lay very still; for, just then, a good many people—chattering old women, noisy lads, and all sorts of shabby folk—were passing through the cemetery, toward the further wall.

The crowd seemed to be expecting something—an imposing funeral, I said to myself. I soon found out why they were so eager to get to the boundary wall of the cemetery: In the strip of earth just outside the wall was the suicide's grave.

He is not to rest among the respectable Christians; but in the strip of unconsecrated ground outside the sacred inclosure. No priest leads his funeral train; his body comes to its last resting place in the knacker's cart, on a bier made of four rough deals. The coffin is unpainted; there is no name-plate on the lid.

The bell on the neck of the knacker's old steed tolls him to the grave. Instead of a solemn funeral dirge,

there is the noisy chatter of the curious mob; and in lieu of funeral oration are the knacker's stupid and offensive jokes, which he cracks while he prepares to lower the coffin into the grave. Before he does this, he takes a knife from his pocket, and whittles a few chips from the coffin; and over these the gaping crowd—especially the old women—quarrel and higgle, gladly giving their last pence for the relics. And these people never suspect that the man who leans heavily against the broken cross, hard-by the new-made grave, might rush suddenly upon them, and with the stump of the broken cross crack the skulls of those whom he chanced to strike!

At last the knacker took note of me:

"Well, Master Soldier," he called, "and how goes it with you? Don't you want to exchange a few pence for a chip from the coffin of the man who hung himself? There is great virtue in such a bit of wood! It will preserve you from lightning, and—"

"I would rather have a nail out of the coffin," I interrupted, "for iron will attract lightning, which is what I most desire."

The fellow was ready enough to comply with my request, but he said the nail would be worth a thaler. I gave him the thaler, the last money I possessed in the world! and received the nail—my legacy from my father!

Later, I had a ring made of the coffin-nail, and I still wear it on the fore-finger of my right hand.

"Well," enunciated his highness, drawing his hand-

kerchief from his pocket; "you certainly were punished for your misdeeds, my son. Your sufferings must have been greater than if you had been tortured on the wheel."

The chair's comments were inaudible amid the sounds of emotion, which came from behind the prince's handkerchief.

# PART VII.

## CHAPTER I.

### PEACEFUL REPOSE.

I was now without a heller in my pocket; and yet I did not feel poor. I thought to myself: I am a man, born this day—nothing, and nobody. I am so much better off than the new-born babe, in that I shall not have to be taught how to walk and talk, need no one to feed me, and rock me to sleep.

I determined I would not remain longer on German soil. If I remained, only one of two alternatives was left to me: If I desired to associate with respectable folk, I should have to allow them, when they discovered who I was, to cut off my head; and if I went back to my old life, or into the army, I should have to cut off the heads of my fellow-creatures. I had no desire to do either.

After my varied, and troublous experiences, I yearned for peace and quiet. My plans were soon formed. There was considerable trade in lumber, between Andernach and Holland. Innumerable rafts, composed of huge tree-trunks for masts, and piles for

dams, were floated down the Rhine; and to the owner of one of these rafts I hired myself as rower.

The wage was fair: thirty pfenings a day, with bread, cheese, dried fish, and a jug of beer. I never drank my portion of beer, but sold it for three pfenings, to one of my comrades on the raft, who got thirsty twice daily. I drank only water.

When my fellow rowers would curse and swear, because a strong wind, or the current, drove the raft against the rocks, I would remonstrate mildly with them; and assure them that such speech in the mouths of Christian men was displeasing to God; and when, to pass the time, they would sit down to a game of dice, I would withdraw to the further end of the raft. If they urged me to join the game, I would reply:

"Thou shalt not covet what belongs to thy neighbor."

After awhile the jeers of my comrades attracted the attention of the owner of the raft.

"Hello, lad; what's the matter with you? You don't drink, don't gamble, and don't swear—you are damnably pious, it seems to me! But, you are a first-rate worker; and I shall sell you in Nimeguen for at least three times as much as any of those lazy louts."

"You are going to sell me and my comrades in Nimeguen?" I exclaimed in amazement.

"Why, certainly! What the devil else should I do with you? You can float down stream on the raft; but I couldn't float you up-stream!—and I couldn't carry you on my back, could I? But, don't you worry. I'll find good places for the lot of you. There will be

plenty of buyers for the rowers, as well as for the raft, and the price every fellow brings will be equally divided between me and himself!"

"What becomes of the men—usually?" I ventured to inquire.

"Well, I don't believe *all* are chopped into sausage-meat! The Hollander likes to be a sailor—but only a captain, or a pilot. He likes also to be a soldier, but again he prefers to be a captain, or the commandant of a fortress. Therefore, common seamen and private soldiers are in demand; and for this the ignorant stranger is good. Consequently, you need only say which you prefer: to become a sailor, or a land-lubber —and take your choice."

I deliberated a moment, then I said to him:

"I will tell you the truth, Captain, because I have vowed never again to let a lie pass my lips. I am tired of soldiering. I have shed so much blood on the battlefield, that the remembrance of it oppresses my soul. I don't want to be a soldier; I would rather go to sea, and be rocked by the waves."

"Well, you are an ignorant dunce!" he exclaimed. "Don't you know that, if you go to sea, you will get right into the thick of battle? The Dutch fight all their real battles at sea. They keep an army on shore, only that they may have troops to capitulate when a fortress is starved out by the enemy! The soldiers never get any actual fighting. Punctuality, sobriety, irreproachable conduct—these are the Dutch soldier's strong points—and, the devil fly away with me, if you don't

rise to be a corporal in less than a twelve-month, if you join the army! What were you before?"

"A gunner."

"Well, you can be a gunner in the Dutch army."

"But, what have the gunners in the Dutch artillery to do if there is no enemy to shoot at?" I asked.

"Oh, they find enough to occupy their time. On Saturday evenings they have the management of the fire-works, which are set off in the park; and on the other days of the week they prepare the rockets, and other things, for the Saturday evening's display."

That is why I became a gunner in the artillery, in the goodly city of Nimeguen. Sixty dollars was the price paid for me, the half of which I received.

I was now in a community that exactly suited me. Here was no mighty uproar, no rioting, no drinking. Here, no vain braggart youths molested the wives of the staid burghers. Here were no conflicts between the military and the citizens. All were at peace with one another.

On Sunday mornings the armed, and the unarmed residents went together to church; and in the evening all drank their pints together amicably in the beer-houses. The soldiers were allowed, when not on guard duty, or otherwise engaged in the fortress, to work for the citizens; the money thus earned belonged to themselves. And there were many chances to secure employment. The entire city of Nimeguen was a huge flower-garden, in which was grown that most important article of commerce: the tulip bulb.

It is a well-known fact that not only entire Europe but all the lands under the dominion of the Turkish sultan, would suffer a greater financial loss, were the Dutch tulip-bulbs to remain out of the markets for a year, than if all other crops were to fail for the same length of time.

By saying this, I do not mean that the carnation is not also a necessary luxury—if I may so term it; but the tulip is, and will remain, the most important article of commerce in the lands I have mentioned. One tulip-bulb is worth as much as a peck of wheat. But it is of different values—according to the color. There are tulips which only kings and sultans can afford to have bloom in their gardens.

I was fortunate enough to secure employment for my leisure hours, as gardener's assistant, on the estate of a widow who was "tulip-wealthy."

The lady would visit her tulip beds early every morning, to see them in bud; and again late in the afternoon, to see the full-blown flowers. At such times I never got a glimpse of her face; for she always wore a huge cap, from which only the tip of her nose protruded.

But I decided, after I had been on the estate a week, that the fair owner must be young, for when she addressed a remark to me, which she did occasionally, her voice was so low—as if she feared I might hear what she said.

To judge by the enormous quantities of bulbs she sent to market, the widow must have been very rich; but the bulbs were not her only treasures. She possessed

a collection of shells, fresh, and salt-water, that represented a very tidy sum of money.

In Holland, as well as in England, and France, the shell had also a commercial value; and wealthy collectors vied with one another to secure the finest examples of the *spordilus regius;* the "sun-ray" mussel; the rainbow-hued "venus-ear"; the "queen's cap"; the "tower of Babylon"; and "Pharaoh's turban," and would pay as high as two hundred dollars for a perfect specimen of the shell they wanted. I have known a perfect *scalaria preciosa* to bring one hundred zequins. This shell is more valuable than the pearl; and my fair employer possessed a whole drawerful of them. Her sainted husband had collected them; and they would have sold for more than would a three-master loaded with grain.

More than one nabob had offered fabulous sums for the collection; and it was said that a British peer, who was devoted to the study of conchology, had even gone so far as to offer his hand and title to the widow, in order to gain possession of the much coveted treasure.

The widow who hesitates loses a title; while the lady was considering the peer's offer, there was a sudden fall in the price of shells, and my lord sailed away to England.

What caused this depression in the shell-market you ask?

Well, as your highness, and the honorable gentlemen, must know, every sea-creature like the *scalaria* builds its house with the volutions turning to the left.

One day a sailor, whose home was in Nimeguen,

returned from a voyage to Sumatra, and brought with him a large number of *scalaria* with the shells turned in just the opposite direction—from left to right. Now, a shell of this order was a decided *lusus naturæ*, and the price for the ordinary pattern at once depreciated. The bankers and nabobs, who had formerly vied with one another in their quest for the *scalaria preciosa*, were now so inflamed with the desire to possess a *scalaria retrotorsa*, that they willingly paid from two to three thousand thalers for a single specimen. On the other hand, the ordinary *scalaria*, which had sold readily for one hundred ducats, could now be bought for ten, and fifteen thalers.

This was a heavy blow for my widowed employer, and she soon found that she had not the strength to bear it alone.

When I heard of her loss, I summoned enough courage to say to her:

"If this unlucky business about the shells is all that troubles you, my dear lady, I think I can help you. I have a scheme that will in a very short time produce shells which turn to the right—and in such quantities, that you can supply all the shell-markets in the country."

The widow reflected several moments, then replied:

"But, I couldn't think of allowing you to employ witch-craft to secure such shells for me. I do not approve of magic. I have always held aloof from sorcery, charms, conjuring, and all such infernal practices; and, as I hope some time to be united with my beloved husband, who is with the saints, I could not

bind my soul to the wicked one, by countenancing any sort of magic, or idolatry."

"There is neither magic nor idolatry connected with my scheme to benefit you, gracious lady," I assured her. "What I have in mind is a purely scientific experiment. It is fully described in a large book written by the learned Professor Wagner, who was a very pious man, as well as a very clever scholar."

"The book I allude to, gracious lady, treats of the sympathy and antipathy of plants, and cold-blooded animals; and is all about creatures made by our Heavenly Father. It is a noteworthy fact, that the bean vine always twines from left to right around the stake which supports it; while the hop as invariably winds from right to left—neither of them ever makes a mistake. If, however, the bean and the hop be planted close together, then, the two plants being antipathetic one to the other, the bean will twine to the left, and the hop to the right."

*"Quid fuit probatum."*

"From such experiments the learned professor was led to experiment with living creatures. He found that, when an acaleph which forms its shell from right to left in the flower-beds at the bottom of the ocean, chances to lie in close proximity to a *nautilus pompilius*, which belongs to the cephalopods, and builds from left to right, the two, because of their antipathy for each other, will reverse the order of their volutions."

"From this it is clear that those conchologists, who have created a veritable social revolution with their *scalaria retrotorsa*, and have shaken the foundations of

prosperity in the Dutch low countries, have accidentally come upon such shells which, in consequence of an antipathetic propinquity, have reversed their order of building—and by so doing, my dear lady, have caused you great loss and sorrow. But, you need sorrow no longer, if you will graciously assent to my proposition. It will, I feel confident, bring you a fortune so enormous that even the queen regent will envy you!"

"But, what is your proposition?" queried the pious soul, and for the first time, half of her face emerged from the depths of her cap.

"It is this, gracious lady: Order your agents to bring from the ocean living *scalaria*, and *nautili*, which are to be secured with least trouble during the mating season. We will prepare for them here a large basin of sea-water, with sand from the bottom of the ocean. In this we will plant sea-weeds, place our living shells among them, and feed them with star-fish, holothures, and other soft-bodied marine creatures. After a season our shell-fish will spawn; the eggs of the *scalaria* cling together—like a string of pearls; those of the *nautili* adhere to one another by sixes, in shape of a star.

"When we shall have secured a number of broods, we will fasten together the ends of a *scalaria* string, forming a circle, in the center of which we will place a star of *nautilus* spawn; and you will see, when the tiny creatures escape from the eggs, that they will build their houses in a reversed order from the parent shell."

My plan was quite clear to the fair widow; she gave her orders at once to her agents, for the *scalaria*, and

*nautili*, and from that moment treated me with great respect and affability.

Meanwhile, I continued to perform my duties: I polished my guns mornings; inspected the soldiers' coats, to see if any of the buttons had been sewed on wrong side up—the lower part of the state's coat of arms uppermost—and reported to the captain that everything was in order. Saturday evenings I attended to setting off the fire-works; and every week-day afternoon I worked in the widow's garden.

What I earned I laid by. I never touched pipe, nor glass—not even when they were offered to me; and to whomsoever I addressed a remark, I gave the title belonging to him. Thus, I gained the respect of all my fellow-citizens. I had become what I had long desired: a respectable God-fearing man—"

"Now, look out for a special bit of rascality;" *sotto voce*, interjected the chair.

I admit it was to win promotion that I conducted myself with such propriety, continued the prisoner. I was extremely desirous of attaining a lieutenancy.

When the living *scalaria*, and *nautili*, arrived together with the creatures which were to serve as food for them, they were placed in the large basin with a wall about it, I had prepared for them in the lower portion of the tulip garden; and in due time the spawn was ready for further operation.

My gracious employer was greatly surprised to learn that the eggs of the shell-fish have a peculiarity which distinguishes them from the eggs of birds and insects. With the development of the embryonic fish, its envel-

ope also extends; one such egg, which at first is hardly as large as a lentil, increases to the size of a hazel-nut. In this condition its outer covering is very thin—merely a transparent membrane, through which the now quickened animal may be seen revolving with the celerity of a spinning top. One may even detect the pulsations of its heart.

"The fellow has actually taken it upon himself to deliver a lecture on malacology!" irritably interposed the chair. "I am sorry to prolong the hearing, your honor," deferentially returned the prisoner, "but, I beg you will allow me to finish what I have to say on this subject, in order that I may explain why I was accused of conjuring. I desire to prove that what I did was not accomplished by aid of any infernal power; but through my own intelligence, in discovering, and making use of one of Nature's secrets."

As I mentioned before, one may perceive, in the embryonic mollusk, the incessant rotary movement from left to right. In order to keep the two antipathetic broods constantly in the close juxtaposition necessary to influence their development, I was obliged to handle them frequently, as the eggs would move about—

"Stop!" interrupted the chair, "mollusks have no eyes; how then were those you hatched able to see their antipathetic neighbors, and move away from them?"

Their antipathetic sensations informed them. Though mollusks have no eyes, they are endowed with other remarkable organs—such as are not found in

warm-blooded animals. However, to cut my story short, the quickened *scalaria*, and *nautili*, immediately began to form their shells in the reversed order I had expected, and the secret of fabulous enrichment was solved.

During the mysterious process of nature—while the shell-fish were industriously rearing their priceless houses—my patroness daily spent a half hour or more beside the sea-water basin; and would even, now and then, assist me to restore the creatures to their proper positions.

At first she would push her sleeves only an inch or two above the wrists; but, after awhile, they were tucked above the elbows, and I could admire as much as I wanted the beautiful white arms—a favor no modest woman will allow anyone but her own husband.

As the work had to be done, and as we did not want a third party to have cognizance of our experiment, the fair widow was obliged to assist me, and the natural result of the bared arms was: I became her legal husband. Therefore, it was neither through magic, nor witch-craft, nor yet through seductive arts employed by myself, that I became the legal protector of the richest, and handsomest young widow in Nimeguen.

("The truth of the matter is: the modest Dutch widow bewitched the valiant gunner, and compelled him to marry her!" was the chair's sarcastic interpolation.)

Well, be that as it may, the lady was amply rewarded for marrying me. The *scalaria retrotorsa* resulting from my experiment, brought her enormous

wealth. We did not know, at last, what to do with all the money that kept pouring into our coffers; but, the larger portion of her reward by far, she found in the conjugal fidelity I vowed to her. I would not have believed that I possessed so many of the attributes necessary to the making of a pattern husband, and my wife would have been entirely satisfied with me, had I been a captain like her first spouse.

But I was only a gunner!

My predecessor had been a captain, it is true, but he had never seen a battle; and when, on *Corpus Christi,* he commanded the city militia, and gave orders to fire the salute, he always pressed his hands against his ears to shut out the noise.

Still, his title gave his wife the right to call herself "Frau Hauptmannin;" while, as my wife she was merely "Constablerinn"—a degradation intolerable to any proud-spirited woman.

I tried to purchase at least a lieutenant's commission; but there were fifty-six applicants for the position ahead of me; and there was no telling how many years I should have to wait for my turn.

My wife at last became so sensitive that, in order to escape being addressed by the inferior title, she ceased to go out of the house; and when she had occasion to make mention of me to any one, she always spoke, or wrote, in this wise: "The husband of the widow of Captain Tobias van der Bullen." That honorable and high-born gentlemen, is how I came to be called—through no fault of mine!—by my twelfth false name: "Tobias van der Bullen."

I must confess, it was an extremely dull life. Of what use to us were the hoards of gold in the treasure-chests? We did not know how to spend them. I did not drink wine; I was not allowed to smoke at home, because it was an unclean habit. And I was always at home, when not at the barracks, because I had nowhere else to go.

At the merchants' casino, of which I might have become a member had I so elected, all the conversation was about matters I could not endure. The men were so grave and sedate, there was no fun in trying to play tricks on them; and the women were virtuous to such a degree, that not one of them would have allowed a barn-yard cock to scratch worms for more than one hen.

As all married men know, women are peculiar creatures. There are times when they become impressed with a desire to possess certain things that—so say the sagacious doctors—it is unwise, nay dangerous, to refuse to gratify the request. I have heard said, that a woman has been known to long for a dish of shoemaker's paste; another believed she would collapse if she did not get a frog to devour; still another, vowed she could not survive, if her husband did not rise from his bed at midnight, and hasten to the nearest grocery for a box of superfine wagon grease!

Now, my wife was seized with a longing to possess a sheet of parchment—a desire, you will say, that might easily have been gratified. But, the sort of parchment she wanted did not grow on every bush! A document, engrossed with the words which certified that her hus-

band was a captain, was what she craved. But, where was I to procure it?

Chance one day brought me face to face with an old acquaintance, Mynheer Ruissen. He recognized me at once. It would have been useless to deny my identity; moreover, there had been established between us a certain good-fellowship that justified me in believing I might safely take him into my confidence.

He told me how zealously the officers of the law were searching throughout Germany for the fugitive, who had substituted tin church-vessels for the gold and silver ones used in the Templars' castle; and for having caused the wonderful metamorphosis of the Hamburg moo-calf.

("Fine phrases for robbery, and assassination!" commented the chair).

It was fortunate for me that I was known in Holland only under the name of my wife's deceased husband; had the worthy Dutchmen known who I was, the German authorities would not have remained long in ignorance as to the whereabouts of the fugitive criminal they were seeking.

I confided to Mynheer Ruissen my desire to obtain the title of captain in order to prevent my wife from grieving herself to death.

"Well, my son," he observed after a moment's deliberation, "it isn't such an easy matter to get to be a captain—on shore. There is no war now. These Hollanders prefer to look on fighting at a distance. If you want to become a captain, come with me to sea. I am

on my way to East India, with small arms and cannons for the nabob Nujuf Khan, of Bengal. There's a general in his army, who is a countryman of yours—a Reinhard Walter. He was an adventurer like yourself when he went to India; and now he is a distinguished man. He changed his name to 'Sommer,' and the natives out yonder call him 'Sumro.' He is in need of soldiers, especially skilled gunners. If you will come with me—who can tell?—you may become not only a captain, but a prince within a twelve-month."

The tales Mynheer Ruissen related of General Sommer's success in Bengal were so marvelous, they inflamed me with the desire to try my fortune in that distant land; besides, the wearisome dullness of my monotonous existence in Nimeguen was driving me to madness. I decided to accompany the Mynheer, whom I introduced to my wife. She was almost beside herself with delight, when he told her he knew of a land in which there grew a tree, called the banyan, with a thousand branches, every one bearing a hundred figs, in every one of which might be found a captain's commission. And these wonderful figs might be had for the plucking, by any one who would take the trouble to journey to that distant land.

"You must start at once, my dear," said my wife in urgent tones—as if she feared there might not be any of the figs left for me, if I delayed going immediately. "At once! You must on no account miss the ship!"

With her own hands she packed everything I should need for the journey—not forgetting soap and tooth-

brushes! And she did not weep at parting with me. You see, the women of Holland become accustomed to having their husbands go away on long journeys, to be absent for years. I confess I was not sorry to go; for, I knew that, if I stopped at home, when the third member of the family arrived, it would be my task to rock the cradle. I preferred to be rocked myself by the waves on a good ship!

Two days later I bade farewell for a time to Europe, and set sail with Mynheer Ruissen for India. A favorable wind sent us skimming out of the harbor; my wife waved a farewell with her handkerchief from the shore.

"Did you commit any crimes on the high seas?" This query from the chair interrupted the voyage for a few moments.

"Nothing worth mentioning, your honor."

"Then, just skip over the entire ocean, and don't waste our time with descriptions of flying-fish, and chanting mermaids. Debark without further delay in Bengal, and let us hear what rascalities you perpetrated there?"

# PART VIII.

## IN BENGAL.

### CHAPTER I.

### BEGUM SUMRO.

The next morning Hugo resumed his confession:

I hope the honorable gentlemen of the court will pardon me, and not imagine I wish to prolong this hearing, if I mention what may seem trifling details. They are absolutely necessary to render intelligible the recital of my most serious transgressions: idolatry, polygamy, and regicide—

"All of which you will prove to have been so many praiseworthy acts!" interpolated the chair.

To begin with—continued the prisoner, paying no heed to the chair's interpolation—from one of the upper windows of a tall tower that stands on the left bank of the Ganges, in the neighborhood of Benares, projects a bamboo pole as thick as a man's waist; and from it depends, by an iron chain, a large iron cage. A man is confined in this cage. His food is conveyed to him from the window of the tower, through a long

hollow pipe of bamboo. The cage hangs over a large pool of water that is fed by an arm of the river, and swarms with voracious crocodiles.

It is a horrible sight, in the late afternoon, to see these ferocious brutes lift their heads from the water, and grin at the man in the cage. If he should break the iron bars which confine him in his airy prison, and attempt to escape by leaping into the pool, the hungry monsters would devour him skin and hair.

"Who is the man?" queried the chair.

"No less a personage than his royal highness, Shah Alum, the heir to the throne of the great Mogul."

"Why is he confined in the cage?"

"Because he extended the hospitalities of his roof to his highness, Mir Cossim, the nabob of Bengal, whom the English banished from his territory, after the battle of Patna. Later, after the battle at Buxar, Shah Alum himself fell into the power of the English; and Mir Cossim was obliged to flee to the protection of the nabob of Andh, whose commander-in-chief was the General Sommer, of whom Mynheer Ruissen had told me. The English demanded of the nabob of Andh, that he deliver to them Mir Cossim and Sommer: whom they wanted to cage, and hang beside Shah Alum, to keep him from getting lonely! But the nabob of Andh allowed Sommer to escape; and he fled across the Jumna, where he organized another army. He was again defeated by the English, and fled to Joodpoor, where he placed himself under the protection of Prince Radspoota. Here he organized troops after the manner of those in Europe, and vanquished the rajahs

of Chitore, and Abeil. Again he was compelled by the English to flee—but not by the force of arms this time; his enemies intimidated the prince, his protector; and, in order not to cause his highness any inconvenience, Sommer went to Delhi, the chief city in India, where he sought the protection of Najuf Khan. The full name of this ruler is: 'Mirza Nujuf Khan Zülfikar al Dowlah, commander-in-chief to the Great Mogul.' From him Sommer received a hearty welcome."

"This Sommer," observed the chair, "seems to have been a vagrant like yourself."

"I consider that a great compliment, your honor, and thank you for it!" returned the prisoner. Then he resumed his confession: Sommer had an opportunity the very first day to prove his gratitude for the friendly reception accorded him by Najuf Khan. The mutinous Mahrattas made a sudden attack that night on the residence of the Khan, and would have assassinated him, had not Sommer hastened with the loyal Mahrattas to the rescue, and vanquished the mutineers. And they were fine fellows—devilish fine fellows, too—those mutinous Mahrattas! The crack troop of the imperial army! They had once compelled a former commander-in-chief, who had failed, for some reason or other, to pay the troops, to sit, bound hand and foot, and with bare head in the scorching sun, until he gave orders to have them paid.

("I think it will be well to keep that episode from the ears of our troops," observed the prince with a meaning smile.)

In gratitude for his rescue, Najuf Khan charged

Sommer with the organization of his army; and in a short time he, Sommer, got together a force of natives, and Europeans, sufficient to conquer a neighboring province, the chief city of which is Agra; he also captured the so-called impregnable citadel of Drig, in which rock-fortress he imprisoned nabob Nevil Szig.

In reward for this victorious campaign, the emperor of Delhi appointed Sommer king of the conquered province of Sardhana. Thus, the son of a grocer in Treves became the sovereign of an East Indian province.

I trust the honorable gentlemen of the court have received this somewhat prolix preface with favor. I believed it necessary, in order to familiarize you with the marvelous changes, which are worked by a mysterious fate in that tropical clime, where alone such changes are possible.

If I could but delineate approximately the peculiarities of that region, of the atmosphere I breathed, the ground I trod, I believe the honorable gentlemen would say: "Arise, and go your way in peace. You are not to blame for what you have done. Your transgressions are but the fruits of the soil which produces also the boa and the upas tree."

The province of Sardhana is ten times as large as the grand-duchy of Treves; and the revenue of its sovereign four times that of the grand duke.

It is a very fruitful country, rich in grain, wool, and tobacco. Sommer built a fort near his residence; and with the aid of his troops kept the neighboring provinces under subjection. He forced a passage through

the forests of Mevas, into which, until then, none of the foreign conquerors had been able to penetrate; which had formed an impassable barrier for the great Alexander on his triumphal march; baffled the hordes of Djingis Khan, whose inhabitants sallied forth only when they desired to levy tribute on a neighboring tribe.

After vanquishing these savages, Sommer directed his attention toward the inhuman Balluken, who offered the blood of young girls in sacrifice to their gods, and in a very short time succeeded in dislodging them from their rocky retreat. Ultimately, he undertook to subdue the royal Pertaub Singh, which he accomplished—but not through the force of arms: by his powers of persuasion, which he possessed to a marvelous degree.

Sommer's patron, as was natural, wished to bestow on his successful commander-in-chief a new reward for all these conquests. There was a beautiful young girl, named Zeib Alnissa (the Hindoo for "ornament of her sex"), the daughter of one of the most influential princely families in Delhi, and this girl the emperor sought in marriage for his favorite.

Sommer informed his patron that he would espouse the beautiful Zeib Alnissa if she would adopt the Christian faith.

"Why," exclaimed the emperor, "can't you love a woman who worships Brahma?"

"Oh, yes, your imperial highness," responded Sommer; "it is because I should love her very much, that I want her to belong to my faith. I am not a young

man any more, and I have a profligate son whom I have been forced to disown. If I should die, my wife, according to the Brahminical custom, would be burned alive with my body. If she becomes a Christian, she will not have to ascend the funeral pyre, but my throne, where she will reign as Begum, and prevent my kingdom from falling into the hands of my worthless son."

The emperor conceded that Sommer's argument was just; and permitted the foreign missionaries to convert the lovely young princess to the Christian faith. This was a concession never before granted to a European in India.

Zeib Alnissa adored her husband. She accompanied him on every expedition he undertook; watched over him; guarded him from the secret enemies and treachery which encompass every East Indian sovereign. The successful commander-in-chief had many enemies and rivals. The English company had long ranked among his opponents. Not infrequently he was rescued as by a miracle from great danger by the watchful care of his devoted wife.

Ultimately, however, his enemies succeeded in their attempts on his life; and the brave commander-in-chief succumbed to the poison secretly administered to him. He died in the arms of the faithful Zeib Alnissa, just about the time I arrived in Sardhana, to take command of his artillery.

His widow, under the title of Sumro Begum, ascended the throne, thus preventing, as her husband had desired, her step-son from inheriting it.

This son was a truly immoral and wicked fellow. I

saw him for a few minutes after the Begum's accession to the crown, and after she had confirmed my appointment as commander of the fort. He actually had the effrontery to try to bribe me to betray the Begum into his power; and, on finding that his efforts were useless, he threatened to revenge himself on me when he should come into possession of the throne.

"Very well," I retorted. "When that time comes I shall become a regicide."

How little I dreamed then, that my words were prophetic!

Meanwhile, Sumro Begum grasped with a firm hand the reins of government. She increased her army, and added several pieces of ordnance to the artillery.

Seated on a spirited battle-horse, or elephant, she inspected the manoeuvers in person.

Her neighbors in the adjacent provinces very soon learned to fear and respect her; even the emperor gave her credit for great prudence and wisdom. Indeed, so great was the influence she wielded, that her voice frequently decided the issue in the discussions at court.

Those East Indian dignitaries are a jealous folk. When Gholam Kadir found that his influence at the imperial court was secondary to that of Sumro Begum, he marched with his troops on the capital, and began to bombard the palace. Sumro Begum, however, heard the thunder of the cannonading, and hastily summoning her troops, joined her forces to those of Prince Ivan Buk, and drove the jealous Gholam Kadir back to his province.

The revolt in the interior of his empire concluded,

the emperor was at liberty to turn his attention to the foreign invader. Kuli Khan had captured the fortress of Ghokal Gur. This valuable stronghold had to be recaptured; and troops were not lacking, but leaders were. Sommer's loss was most keenly felt; but Sumro Begum was still to the fore, and she was worth a dozen ordinary generals.

The imperial troops had been trying for three weeks to recapture the fortress of Ghokal Gur. They had become tired of the continued ill-success of their undertaking, and had abandoned themselves to feasting and carousing. One night, after all tipsy heads had been laid to rest, Kuli Khan, with his Mongolian cavalry, surprised the imperial camp, and began to slaughter the stupefied troops. The enemy in the fortress could see by the light of the burning tents the horrible butchery going on outside the walls, and decided to take a hand in it. The emperor's tent was riddled with bullets; two of his palanquin bearers were killed, and he was obliged to seek flight on his own feet. But, whither to turn he knew not, as he was in the center of a furious cross-fire.

It is quite certain that he would have been destroyed, together with his entire army, had not Sumro Begum hastened to the rescue, with her admirably disciplined troops, officered by Europeans.

On hearing of the emperor's danger the heroic Begum summoned her body-guard—hardly one hundred men—entered her palanquin, and hastened, with the battery under my command, toward the thickest of the fight.

When she saw that the enemy from the fortress was taking part in the massacre of the half-sober imperial troops, she called to me:

"Follow my example!"

Then, she sprang from her palanquin, mounted a horse, and at the head of her body-guard, charged upon the enemy.

I knew very well what was expected of me! I placed my battery in such a position that the guns would clear a way for the Begum.

In a very short time the valiant enemy, who had sallied forth from the fortress to take a hand in slaughtering their beleaguerers, were in a wild retreat toward it. Sumro Begum met them at the draw-bridge, took the commander prisoner, and, with him in chains at her side, entered the fort, of which she took possession in the name of the emperor. She left all but ten of her men to guard the fort, and returned to the assistance of the emperor, whose troops, taking courage from the example of the brave Begum, plucked up heart, turned upon their butchers, and after a severe struggle gained the mastery.

The rising sun witnessed the annihilation of the enemy.

The fort was again in the possession of the emperor, who, in face of his entire army, embraced Sumro Begum, and called her his "dear daughter." He did not hesitate to declare, in the presence of his commanding officers, that he owed his life, the lives of six imperial princes, his empire, and the rescue of his army, to the brave woman.

To this the Begum, with a modest blush, made reply: "Not to me alone is due all this praise, your imperial highness. The greater portion belongs to my commander of artillery. This is he"—she drew me forward and presented me to the emperor. "To him must be given a fitting reward for the great service he has done your imperial highness."

The answer to this was:

"Let yourself be the brave man's reward!"

With his own imperial hand he placed the lady's hand in my own, and betrothed her to me with a ring from his own finger. At the same time he appointed me co-regent of Sardhana, under the name of Maharajah Kong. Thus, I became—not a captain, but a maharajah.

"And all this really happened?" inquired the chair.

"Yes, your honor, and more too—as you may read in the court chronicles at Delhi."

"We will hear the rest tomorrow," observed the prince. "It is enough for one day to have heard how the son of an Andernach tanner became assistant sovereign of a province in India."

## CHAPTER II.

### IDOL WORSHIP.

The next day the prisoner resumed his confession:

I was now ruler of a province, with a revenue of twenty lacs of rupees. I had a remarkably handsome and clever wife, with eyes than which no gem was brighter.

But, there was a thought that troubled me night and day:

What was to become of my wife in Holland?

My religion forbade two wives. This thought so troubled me, that at last I confided it to Sumro Begum.

"I don't see why you considered that necessary," interrupted the chair. "You had already told so many lies, another one would certainly have found room beside the rest!"

I beg your honor to remember that I vowed at the grave of my poor father to lead a God-fearing life, and to let nothing but the truth pass my lips. The ring made of the coffin-nail, which I wore on my thumb, constantly reminded me of my vow. Therefore, I considered it my duty to tell Sumro Begum that I had a legal wife in Holland; and that, were I to go back to her, I should find my child on her bosom.

The Begum was not in the least offended when I made my confession; on the contrary, she commended

me for telling the truth. "He who proves himself faithful to the absent one, will certainly remain loyal to the one at hand," she quoted. Only a religion stood between her and me; and that might easily be changed.

"If we remain Catholics, of course two wives are out of the question," decided the Begum, "because that would be bigamy. If we go over to the Brahmans, their sacred books forbid the wife to occupy the throne with her husband, and the widow from marrying again. But, there is the faith of Siva; it permits a man to have more than one wife; it acknowledges no difference of rank between man and man—as do the Brahman and the Christian religions—nor does it consider a woman a soulless animal, men and women are alike human beings. An adherent of the Siva faith may even take a foreigner to wife; he may eat at the same table with his wife, or wives, after the grace before food, prescribed by the Prophet Bazawa, has been repeated. We will adopt this faith, then you may keep your other wife, and I will share with her your love and respect."

I thought over this suggestion for several days, for the fate of an entire province depended on my decision.

On the one hand a people whose prosperity depended on how I would settle the question; a yearly income of several million thalers, a beautiful and clever wife with a heart filled with love for me, with all the delights of paradise on her lips—on the other: the Roman pope, with St. Peter's keys in his possession!

In my position, your highness, and honorable gentlemen, how would you have decided?

"Get along with you, *perversus nebulo!*" exclaimed

his highness, smiling. "You want us to commit ourselves, do you? I'll warrant you suspect what would have been our decision! I don't in the least doubt but even the mayor here, would elect to kiss a beautiful woman rather than the pope's slipper—especially if the choice were submitted to him in the province of Sardhana! It is enough: you became an idol worshipper—forced to it by circumstances. It is your own affair, and one which you will have to settle with a higher tribunal than this one. This indictment may be erased from the record."

Not even the mayor objected to this decision. At first, though, he wrinkled his brows and looked serious; but in the end he smiled with the rest; and dictated to the notary, that the transgression last confessed might be recorded as condoned by the court.

Most worthy and honorable gentlemen, resumed the prisoner, I must now tell you something about the customs and manners of that land whither I had been led by the hand of destiny. Even the sky over there is unlike ours. Why, the sun of Holland would not do for a moon in India! Yon flaming heavens heat the blood and brain to boiling; the humid atmosphere creates phenomena which are like the phantasmagoria of delirium; triple suns, and wreaths of flame appear in the sky; when frequently the mysterious *Fata Morgana* portrays inverted landscapes, and cities; the vivid coloring of the clouds causes the most brilliant hues on the earth below to appear faded and insignificant.

Forests, fields, houses, human beings, at times take on an ocherous hue, as if the world were dead; and

when a rain falls, it is a deluge of fire from a sky of brass. And sometimes, the cloud-burst will be like a rain of blood, and the whole earth will glow with the most brilliant crimson hue.

On very, very hot days, when the native farmers trudge along the high-road (the high caste native never travels on foot, nor appears in public at midday) the dust rising from their feet looks like a fiery mist, and makes one think he is looking on the damned in hades walking amid the flames!

And there too the soil is so different from ours. There the plants we grow in pots in our hot houses thrive and luxuriate under the open sky, and form a wilderness, the lurking place of tigers and lions, in which the fragrance of the very air is intoxicating as wine.

The hundred different varieties of fruits, which ripen in succession throughout the year, explain sufficiently how a people that outnumbers the entire population of Europe are able to subsist on vegetable diet alone, without the nourishment of meats, which their religion prohibits.

The borasses palm supplies them with honey, oil, wine, and sugar; another palm yields flour, butter, and milk; and they have a tree on which grow loaves of bread the size of a human head; raw, this vegetable bread is a sweet fruit; baked, it is as palatable as a bakers' loaf and—

"Stop! stop!" cried the chair, rapping on the table with his stick. "That is going too far! Of all the lies

you have told us, this one about loaves of bread growing on a tree is the most outrageously incredible."

"I am very sorry that your honor refuses to believe there is such a tree. The proof that I am not lying may easily be obtained, if your honor will send a deputation to India, to make inquiries concerning the truth of my statements, if it turns out that a single one of them is lacking in truth, then your honor may disbelieve all the rest."

"Oho!" sneered the chair, "you would like to postpone this trial for a year or more, while a searching commission travelled to the end of the world and back —wouldn't you? We prefer to believe that living creatures also hang on trees like fruits."

"And so they do!" responded the prisoner. "There is a sort of large squirrel, or small dog, that has wings and flies, and at night hangs by its hind legs to the limbs of trees, and looks like a gourd."

"Didn't I say so?" again interrupted the chair with a choleric laugh. "Flying dogs that sleep hanging by their feet! Go on with your fables, you reprobate!— this honorable court is sitting for the sole purpose of believing every lie you choose to tell. I am curious to hear how your bread growing on trees, and your flying dogs are going to clear you of the crimes of bigamy and regicide."

I am coming to that, your honor. The entire world which environs the human being in that distant land, works an irresistible influence on his nature, and the native inhabitant compels, with his peculiar religion, customs, his deeply-rooted prejudices, the foreigner

resident to adopt a mode of life antipodal to that he led at home.

The majority of the natives wear no clothing at all; while the rest bend under a costly burden of greatest splendor.

The Indian is a mixture of the ideally perfect, and the grotesquely hideous, heroic at one moment, cowardly the next, free as a bird, and restricted as an anchorite. He is to be envied for his paradisal simplicity, and admired for his gigantic creations. His cities surpass in magnificence and grandeur those of Europe. His churches are mountains, enormous edifices hewn by artist hands from a single rock; with thousands of majestic columns, and armies of idols; while his huts are more abjectly wretched than the dwellings of our beavers. The Indian, with his thousand gods, to all of whom he renders service and sacrifices—and of whom not one possesses the power to help him—is so gentle-hearted, that he will not take the life of an animal; allows himself to be devoured by lions and tigers; crushed under foot by the rhinoceros; bitten by serpents; and stung by venomous insects—and yet, he considers it no sin to exterminate an entire neighboring folk.

Oh, that is a strange country: where the aristocrat, if touched by a member of another caste, considers himself defiled, and possesses the right to cut off the hand, or arm that touched him, and the mutilated pariah accepts the punishment as his due. Where the wife is burned alive on the funeral pyre of her husband; where the invalid is placed on the banks of a river, and

declared to be already dead, so that, should he recover, he may not return to the living, but seek the "community of the dead," which is made up of one-time invalids, recovered like himself.

Dwelling amid such a people, every idea the European entertains when he lands on that shore very soon fades away; for, there, they have different virtues and different sins.

"This lengthy dissertation I take it," interrupted the chair, "is for the purpose of acquainting the court that bigamy and regicide are permissable crimes among that wonderful people?"

Bigamy is permissable, your honor, on conditions: if the first wife consents, her husband may marry a second. But, before the consent of the first wife is secured, he may not kiss and embrace his second.

## CHAPTER III.

### MAIMUNA, AND DANESH.

My beautiful Zeib Alnissa was a wonderful woman. On the day of our wedding, which was celebrated with truly Asiatic splendor, when meal-time came, and I took my seat at the head of the table, she could not be induced to sit by my side; but seated herself at the extreme lower end of the board. This custom, she said, we should have to observe, until we received my first wife's consent to our marriage, which would give my second the right to repeat the Bazawa grace before food. Until my new wife was entitled to perform this ceremony we were not allowed to drink from the same cup; were not permitted to clasp hands, or look into each other's eyes. I might not have respected all these rigid laws, which kept me separated from my beautiful bride, had not Zeib Alnissa herself understood how to compel me to respect them.

The Siva religion prohibits the use of wine, which is to be regretted; for, in that tropic zone, grow hundreds and hundreds of different sorts of fruits, which would yield nectarious beverages, the taste of which would cause one to forget all about wine, and disgust one with beer. Tons of deliciously sweet and aromatic sap flow from the pierced palm, and the agave, and its effect on the human senses is nothing like the stupor

which results from drinking our liquors; it is rather a state of exaltation.

My charming bride understood well how to entertain me with tales of her native palm forests. She related the history of Prince Kamir Essaman, and the Princess Bedur. She told me how the prince, who lived in India, and the princess, whose home was in Persia, were brought together while they slept, by the two friendly genii, Maimuna and Danesh, who bore the sleeping lovers on their pinions to the place of meeting, and then back to their homes again. It was an interesting tale, but I grew very sleepy while listening to it. I am convinced that the spicy potion Zeib Alnissa prepared for me caused the drowsiness, and I only remember that, as I sank back on my pillow, she placed the prohibitory unsheathed sword between herself and me.

The moment I closed my eyes in sleep I quitted this earth. I could hear the rustle of wings as I was borne swiftly through the clouds, which parted with a sound like thunder—as when they are rent by lightning. By the light of the stars I could see that I was lying on the wings of the Jinnee, Danesh.

He was of gigantic form; his wings, like those of a bat stretched from horizon to horizon; his hair looked like bamboo rods, and his beard like palm leaves.

So swift was our flight that the moon changed from full to last quarter above us. A meteor raced to overtake us, but, when it came abreast with Danesh, he thrust out his foot, and gave it a kick that burst it, and sent myriads of sparks flying in all directions. Looking

downward, I saw China, which I recognized by its porcelain towers, and long canals. Then Thibet, with the snow-clad summits of the Himalayan range, and the great Mongolian plain.

At last we arrived over Mount Ararat. I knew where I was, by the tongues of flame which encircled the mount like a wreath. They were the altars of the fire-worshipping Parsees—the source of Baku's eternal fires; and Danesh was one of the great spirits of the flame-adoring heathen. On the summit of Mount Ararat was a magnificent palace—to describe its splendors is impossible to the human tongue! Its walls were covered with the names of those persons who have been happy, and have thanked God therefor. The letters in which the names are written are so radiant, they make night as light as day.

Here, in a sumptuous apartment, with silken hangings, and glittering with gems, Danesh laid me gently down on a divan; and immediately began to laugh in a tone that sounded like thunder.

In answer to his laughter, there came a sound from the air, as if the balmy south wind were murmuring a complaint.

"You are the one-hundred-thousandth part of a minute late," called Danesh.

"And you are three-hundred-thousand eons ahead of time," replied the second voice; and the next instant Maimuna descended from the sky.

This Jinnee was also of giant stature, but of feminine form. Her ringlets were of sea-coral, her wings of

gleaming mother-of-pearl, and on them she bore a woman whom she laid by my side on the divan.

Then the two genii suddenly changed to vapor; one blue, the other yellow; and while I was staring at them the two columns of smoke sank into two large crystal decanters, which stood on the table among the costly viands and wines.

Then I turned to look at the woman by my side—it was my own wife, the one I had left in Nimeguen, only that she was more beautiful, and garbed more elegantly than I had ever seen her.

Her voice too was sweeter, her caresses more endearing; she seemed more like a celestial being than a woman of flesh and blood. We showered kisses on each other; I could read in her radiant countenance how overjoyed she was to be with me again; and I was enraptured to clasp her once more in my arms.

We committed a thousand foolish acts; laughed, teased each other like children. We seated ourselves at the bountifully spread board; I shared every bite she took; drank out of her glass; we sat on the same chair, drank of every bottle, and found each one sweeter, more delicious than the last.

"Let us taste what is in those bottles too," suggested my wife, pointing toward the two decanters—one blue, the other yellow.

"Yes, let us," I assented, and I drew out the glass stoppers. But, instead of wine, two columns of vapor rose from the decanters, one blue, the other yellow, and filled the room. The vapor took shape, first the blue then the yellow, and one became Danesh, the

"I could read in her radiant countenance how overjoyed she was to be with me again; and I was enraptured to clasp her once more in my arms"

other Maimuna, and we knew that our bliss was at an end—that we should have to part.

We added our names to those gleaming on the walls, to certify that we also had been happy there.

After I had written my name, it occurred to me that I had something important to tell my wife; so I said to her: "My love, I must tell you that I have become a king; and that I have taken a second wife. I want to ask a favor of you; will you consent to let me kiss and embrace her as I do you?"

The woman replied: "I do consent."

That I might have proof of our having spent a blissful hour together, and that she had given me the desired permission to take a second wife, she pressed my hand so tightly in her own, that the wedding ring on my finger—the one with which I had espoused her—burst asunder. And that she also might possess evidence of our meeting, I gave her the "lingam"—the symbol of the Siva faith—I wore on my arm attached to a gold bracelet. I also tore from the canopy over our divan a small piece of the material of which it was made—crimson silk woven with dragons in gold thread.

Then the two genii took us again on their wings, and soon I was speeding again amid the clouds, with the glittering stars above me.

The icy summits of the Himalayas were already gleaming with the rosy hues of dawn, on noting which Danesh increased his speed. I heard the sea murmuring below—a ray of sunlight from the eastern mountains pierced through Danesh like an arrow, he

dropped me and I fell to the earth. Fortunately I had not far to fall—only from my bed, in the palace of Sardhana, to the floor!

"Was it necessary to tell us what you dreamed?" angrily demanded the chair.

"Well, your honor, if the court at Nimeguen accepted my dream as evidence, and based its decision on it, I think it may also be recorded here. Moreover, the vision I have related is an important factor in this case."

I was so deeply impressed by my dream, that I related it to Zeib Alnissa as an actual occurrence. I assured her I had really been with my other wife, in proof of which I showed her the broken ring on my finger.

"It is a most wonderful occurrence!" was Zeib Alnissa's comment, when I concluded my recital. "Write out the whole vision, exactly as you related it to me, and we will send it to your wife in Holland. One of my captains shall hasten with the document after the messenger you have sent to her with the letter asking her to consent to our marriage."

I acted in accordance with the suggestion, and wrote on a long strip of Chinese palm-paper, which is tough as leather, a full account of my vision. The Begum then sent for seven bonzes, who were skilled writers, that they might, by signing their names to the account, certify that what I had written had really occurred; that Maimuna and Danesh were a well known pair of genii, who mantained direct communication between India and other portions of the globe, and that there

was on Mount Ararat a magnificent palace for the use of lovers who came from distant parts of the world to meet there. All of which was to prove indubitably that I and my wife from Holland had been together in the palace.

This document dispatched, I believed the question of the prohibitory sword between me and Zeib Alnissa settled; but I was mistaken; she did not repeat Bazawa's grace at supper.

"On what are you waiting now?" I asked. "Haven't I asked my other wife for her consent? Haven't I been with her, and given her my lingam?"

"Yes, but she has not yet given you anything. Until I have her written consent in my hands, I dare not repeat Bazawa's blessing," was Zeib Alnissa's smiling reply.

"And I shall have to wait at the gates of paradise, content myself with inhaling the perfume of the flowers within the walls, until our messenger has twice traversed the ocean between India and Holland?"

"He will need to cross only once. I ordered him to take with him several doves, the species with green feathers known as bridegroom's doves. When your wife has written her consent, the messenger will bind it under the wing of a dove, and it will fly from Holland to us here in two days. So, you need reckon only the outward voyage."

But that would take considerable time too! I began to wonder how I should have comforted myself had I, instead of becoming an adherent of Siva, adopted the

faith of Brahma, or Vishnu, or any other of the many-handed, many-footed deities.

"Knave, what about Jehovah?" interposed the chair with just indignation.

"Jehovah, your honor, does not forbid polygamy. The patriarch Jacob had two wives; David had four; Solomon the wise had one thousand four hundred. But, it would be a pity to waste precious time over dogmatic discussion. Besides, my wondering resulted in nothing. One hundred and ten days and nights I passed in the society of my charming bride; we ate at the same table; slept under the same canopy; but not once did I clasp her hand, or kiss her lovely lips."

"I am curious to know how you managed not to do either," observed the prince.

"Does your highness desire me to relate what happened on every one of the one-hundred and ten days and nights?"

"Not by any means!" hastily interrupted the chair. "We want only a summary of your doings out yonder."

The prisoner bowed, and resumed his confession:

I determined that I would not again drink the sort of sleeping potion which had sent me speeding among the clouds on Danesh's back, and communicated my decision to Zeib Alnissa.

"Very well," said she, "then I will prepare a drink for you that will keep you awake all night."

That would suit me.

In India the preparation of elixirs of all sorts has reached a high grade. There is a drug which, if taken

by a man of mild disposition, will make him warlike and fierce; it is called "bangue."

By administering to the peaceable elephants a decoction of the "thauverd," they can be made quarrelsome and ferocious for the combats arranged for the Shah's guests. "Therat" will give one the inspirations of a poet; after taking it, the most unimaginative person will become a romancer, and composer of verses. The "Nazzarani" tax can be collected from the natives only when they have become docile and tractable from having eaten "mhoval" flowers—a species of manna.

Zeib Alnissa gave me some "panzopari" to chew; it possesses a singular property; it will make even the noisiest tippler so sober and sedate that his brain becomes the seat of all wisdom. Then she began to speak of her plans for the future government of our province, and other equally important matters; continuing to talk to me until morning. And during the whole time I remained quiet, and listened attentively; but I saw what I had not yet noticed: that my incomparable bride had a mole in the middle of her left cheek, and I also discovered that she might be alarmingly loquacious if she chose. I could hardly wait until the sun rose. Nothing will so effectually sober a man as advice from his wife; and the remedy is frequently made use of in India as well as in Europe.

A true Indian Singh—that is what a nobleman is called out there—undertakes nothing without first consulting his wife. Indeed, there are some who never give an answer to a question until they have asked their wives what they shall reply. For instance you

ask: "What sort of weather are we going to have this afternoon, Gholem Singh?"

"I will consult my wife and tell you," he answers.

In the afternoon he will say to you—and no matter if a deluge of rain begins to fall while he is speaking:

"We shall have fine weather this afternoon."

The following day my bride and I set out on a tour of our kingdom—a ceremony necessary to my installation as rajah.

An entire brigade on horses, elephants, and camels, accompanied us as escort. The Begum and I rode on separate elephants, as Indian etiquette does not permit man and wife to occupy the same "sovari"—that is what the sedan with a canopy on the back of an elephant is called.

The Begum travelled with the vanguard; I brought up the rear with a good cannon bound to the back of my beast. A cannon, by the way, is a very convenient travelling appendage to a journey in India, as one is frequently called on to give a warm reception to the legions of predatory bands which infest the highways and byways.

My bride and I met only when our elephants chanced to come alongside each other at the resting places. We took part in all sorts of festivities. We bore with patience the wearisome ceremonies attendant upon the adoration of the serpent, and Taku-worship; we even waded to our knees in the sacred waters of the Ganges, at the Moharam pilgrimage; and permitted the frantic Gusseins and fakirs at the Holiza feast to shower over us the red dust of the highway. At the

Ganeza festival we distributed with our own hands the "muzzer," and received in return the "khilla"—each word means gifts; the former is bestowed by the sovereigns on their subjects; the latter are given by the subjects to their rulers. Without this exchange of presents, the sovereignty of the rulers would not be recognized by the people. We visited in their turn all the principal towns and cities; the god-burdened temples and pagodas, which are half church, half tomb—the Jaina animal hospital, where the Hindoo takes care of invalid dogs, cats, oxen, as well as crows, ravens, and turkeys. We also honored with our presence the bayadere communities, where only women dwell. These bayaderes are privileged characters, you must know; they are allowed entry to the emperor's presence, to dance and sing before him and his ministers.

"Not a bad custom, by jove!" muttered the prince; aloud he asked: "Are the bayaderes pretty?"

"Enchantingly beautiful, your highness. Their garments are of silk and cashmere, embroidered with real gold and pearls; their fingers and toes are loaded with rings set with precious gems. Their gowns show a lack of material as do those worn by our women, with this difference: the shoulders and bosoms of our women are left bare; while the bayaderes expose the lower extremities, sometimes even to the—"

"Stop! stop!" irritably called the chair. "We don't want a full description of heathen toilets!"

We also arranged, for the entertainment of our subjects, a number of gorgeous spectacles, and tournaments, resumed the prisoner, dropping the subject of

bayadere fashions. There were combats between elephants, and combats between elephants and men. (The former are called "Mufti;" the latter "Satmari.") There were also combats between lions and boars, and between tapirs.

In return for all these festivities, my bride's relatives entertained us with a feast of lanterns; and games of chess, which were played with living chess-men. We also visited the most remote corners of our kingdom, where dwelt the Thugs, a community whose faith permits them to strangle all foreigners; the Bheels, who worship epidemics instead of gods; the colony of the Quadrumans, whose king is called "Dengue," and his subjects "apes."

Every day of our journey brought something new and interesting. After our visit to the "City of the Seven Sages" we went to the "City of the King's Tombs," where are four magnificent temples, under each of which rest the remains of a king. There are no other inhabitants in this city.

Then followed the pilgrimage to Buddha's tree; for, although we were adherents of the Sivan faith, we were obliged, in order to win the favor of the majority of our subjects, to pay deference to their deity.

Then we journeyed to the "Fountain of Wisdom." There the temple is guarded by bayaderes, who are not permitted to dance anywhere else but in the sacred edifice in adoration of the gods.

"A respectable temple, I must say!" ironically commented the chair, to which the prince appended his good-humored observation:

"Their liturgy can't be very tedious!"

During all this time, I saw my bride only when she was seated on a throne, on an elephant, or in a palanquin. The opportunities for an exchange of words were rare. On the one hundred and tenth day we set out on our return home. On the morning of that day, Zeib Alnissa sent me a letter in which she gave me the welcome news that what might be called our "St. Joseph's marriage" would soon come to a conclusion. The carrier dove had returned from Holland with the longed-for consent from my first wife.

Before leaving our capital, we had arranged for a fitting reception to greet our return. When our cavalcade should approach the city gates, all the most distinguished residents, the raos, the singhs, the sages, bonzes and holy men were to meet us at the head of a gorgeous pageant and greet me as "Rajah," to which title our tour would have given me the right.

Then would follow a splendid feast, that would conclude with the "utterpan" ceremony, in which every guest receives from the rajah's own hands a handkerchief perfumed with rose-water.

The rajah receives the utterpan from his wife, of whom he may demand that the rose-water perfuming be performed in the zenana.

The zenana is that portion of the palace which only the rajah and his wives may enter.

I am ashamed to confess it, honorable gentlemen of the court, but I was so rejoiced, so proud of my success, my extraordinary good fortune filled my soul to such a degree, that I never once thought to offer a

prayer to the god Siva, who had bestowed all the good gifts on me, or to Jehovah, who could take them all from me.

The fakir, who, in his religious enthusiasm, carries on his head a pot of earth until the orange seed planted in it sprouts, grows to a tree, blooms and bears fruit; who binds himself to a post, that he may sleep standing so as not to lose his balance and drop the pot from his head—that fakir does not suffer half as much as did I those one hundred and ten days and nights, when I was forced to refrain from saying to the most beautiful of women: "O, thou my sweetest one!"

But the last day of such restraint and torture was at hand. Before us lay the capital; the gilded roofs of its palaces gleamed through the humid atmosphere.

Already I could see rising from the market-place the "baoli," under which the three-legged stone cow waited (as all believers know) for the hour of midnight to hobble to her pasture outside the walls. Already I saw the multitude in gala attire press forth from the elaborately carved gates, on horses, on camels, on foot —a mingling of gold, gems, beauty, flowers, with rags, filth and unsightly scars.

Zeib Alnissa, as usual, rode at the head of the cavalcade, and I at the end, separated from her by a cannon shot range.

When the multitude from the city met the head of our cavalcade, there ensued a tumult of shouts and cries, but I was too far away to distinguish what was occurring. I could see, though, that Zeib Alnissa had

risen to her feet in the sovari, and was gesticulating excitedly.

I was deliberating whether I should ride forward or remain where I was, when a fakir forced his way to my side. He was the most hideous specimen of his class I had yet seen; his appearance indicated that he had vowed not to cut his hair nor his finger nails for a decade.

"What do you want?" I called down to him.

"I want you to let me come up there and sit beside you in the sovari," he made answer.

One is obliged to comply with any demand these holy men may see fit to make—especially in face of such a multitude. I leaned over the side of my beast, seized the fakir by the hair, and drew him into the sovari.

"Lucky for you that you granted my request," he said, when he was seated by my side. "You have saved your life by so doing. Know that a revolt broke out in the city during your absence. The conspirators declared that the Begum forfeited the throne by marrying you, and have proclaimed the valiant Singh Rais, the son of her first husband, Sumro Shah, rajah of Sardhana. He has taken possession of the city and bribed the army to support him. He has already executed the subjects who remained loyal to you and the Begum, and the same fate awaits you—if he captures you."

Though loath to believe the fanatic's ill tidings, I was forced to credit my eyes, which at that moment saw rude hands lay hold of my beloved Zeib Alnissa, tear her from the sovari, bind her hands, and, amid the

taunts and sneers of the shameless nautchnees, compel her to walk to the gates, while a man, wearing the pearl-decorated hat of a sovereign, climbed to the vacated seat in the sovari.

It was the infamous profligate who, by reason of the honors to which his father had attained, was a prince, but who was, by birth, merely a German nobody, like myself.

He had deposed the Begum as he had threatened, had laid chains on her—the heroic deliverer of her people—and this he had been able to accomplish because he had become an adherent of the religion of Buddha, and because the Begum had become a worshipper of Siva—

"The like of that never could have happened in Europe," interpolated the prince.

My rage and fury were boundless. In one brief moment to lose my kingdom and my bride; to be robbed of power and love; to be forced to look on helpless while a cowardly knave stole my treasures, chief of which was my beautiful Zeib Alnissa!

It was more than Christian patience and Siva humility could endure.

I unstrapped the cannon at the back of the sovari. The new rajah was haranguing the crowd gathered about his elephant, and gesticulating rapidly with his hands, as he gave his orders.

I took aim at his majesty—Boom! The next instant there was no head on the rajah's shoulders, but his arms continued to move convulsively.

Then I turned my elephant's head in the opposite

direction, and urged him to the swiftest gait he was able to go.

A troop of horsemen followed me, but I dashed into the jungle, and soon distanced my pursuers. My life was saved, but only my miserable life. I had nothing, was nothing—

"Oh, yes," interrupted the chair, "you were a good deal: the husband of two wives, and murderer of one king—"

"*Minorem nego, majorem non concedo,*" interposed the prince. "As the prisoner's second marriage was—as he aptly described it: a St. Joseph's union—merely one of form, he cannot be said to have committed bigamy. And concerning the killing of the rajah—*qui bene distinguit, bene docet*!—we would understand thereby that a crime had been committed by a subject against a crowned head. But, if one king kills another one, it cannot be called regicide, but ordinary homicide, which, in the prisoner's case, was justifiable manslaughter—"

"I knew it!" exclaimed the chair. "I knew the rascal would talk himself out of the three capital crimes: idolatry, bigamy, regicide, and prove himself as innocent as St. Susanna!"

But, continued the prisoner, even had I not been robbed of my wealth, of what use would it have been to me? I had come to India to win the rank of captain—not to become a rajah. It is a deal better to be a pensioned captain than a deposed king. The new rajah of Sardhana set a large price on my head; had I fled the accursed country then, I should have spared

myself the terrible misfortunes which overtook me later.

I joined the Bandasaris, who have no fixed residence, but rove continuously between the Ganges and the Indus. They are a race like our gypsies. I believed I might organize them into an army and win back my kingdom, and liberate my beautiful Zeib Alnissa, but the blessing of God did not rest on my undertaking.

When I had got my army ready to march to Sardhana, the chief of the tribe changed his mind about letting me use his people to win back my throne, and, instead, sold me to the English company, which corporation had also offered a price for my head. Thus my unfortunate cranium became the property of the powerful East India Company, and there, if nowhere else, a man learns how to pray.

# PART IX.

## ON THE HIGH SEAS.

### CHAPTER I.

### THE PIRATES.

The English did not think me of sufficient consequence to suspend me in an iron cage over the crocodile pool. This honor was reserved for the native shahs and rajahs.

I was transported, with scant ceremony, to Bombay, from which city I was shipped to sea, together with fifty other prisoners, who, like myself, had come to India to seek their fortunes, and whose chief crime was their nationality. They were natives of France, Holland, Germany and Spain, and the East India Company believed it had a right to arrest them and ship them in a body to New Caledonia.

Now, honorable gentlemen of the court, I beg you to tell me which was the pirate?—I, in the unseaworthy cutter, bound with chains to a Spaniard, perspiring over my oars, sailing to New Zealand instead of to New Caledonia, where the captain had been ordered

to take us; having nothing to eat and drink but dried fish and stale water, the captain having again disobeyed orders, for the East India Company had shipped honest biscuit, smoked meat and brandy for the prisoner's food—which of us, I ask, was the pirate? the captain, who plundered the helpless prisoners in his power and broke the maritime laws—which, I ask, was the pirate; Captain Morder or I?

"I say Captain Morder was the pirate—" and the prince emphasized his reply by thumping the floor with his cane.

Many thanks, your highness; I wanted the question decided, for, against unauthorized force, self-defence is always justifiable. When we poor exiles became aware that our vessel was going farther and farther south, which we were able to judge from the stars; when, in consequence of the wretched food, the scurvy broke out among us; and when at last we also got a taste of the scourge, if we made any complaint, we conspired together to release ourselves from our chains; and to take possession of the cutter.

My hidalgo comrade was an expert in such matters. He showed us how to get rid of our manacles as easily as if they had been gloves or boots. It is a very pretty trick, but I don't think I could show you how it is done unless I received something in return—

"We don't want to learn the trick," interrupted the chair. "We have no use for it."

Well, after we had removed our fetters, we bound the sleeping crew, and, without shedding one drop of blood, made ourselves masters of the "Alcyona."

Now, honorable gentlemen of the court, I ask you: Can what we did be called mutiny? We were not the slaves of the East India Company; we were not prisoners of war; nor were we criminals. The captain had no right to chain us to the oars; we had done nothing to deserve deportation to a savage country.

On Captain Morder, however, rested most of the blame. He treated us free men like negro slaves; he gave us nothing to eat for a whole week but dried fish, though not all of us were papists; and to be more disagreeably contrary, he gave us smoked meat on Fridays because the majority of our crowd were Catholics.

"That rascally captain deserved to be hanged to the tallest mast on his ship!" exclaimed the justly indignant prince.

Yes, your highness, he did, but we didn't hang him, because we couldn't get hold of him. While we were securing the crew, he fled discreetly to the powder-room, and threatened to blow up the ship when we went to take him. We had to treat with him for terms. We assured him we did not want to injure him; we only wanted to leave his ship. To this he replied that we might go to the devil for all he cared.

Then followed a twenty-four hour truce, and our first business was—

"To eat your fill," interposed the chair.

Yes, your honor, to eat and drink all we wanted. Then we lowered the large boat, supplied it with mast and sails; loaded it with all the chests of biscuit, and casks of brandy it would hold, also a small cannon.

Then we cut into bits the rigging of the cutter; threw overboard all the weapons we could find, in order that the captain could do us no injury in case he took it into his head to pursue us; took possession of his charts, compass, and telescope, and sailed away one beautiful moonlight night without saying goodbye to any one. How did Captain Morder reach home with the "Alcyona?" I really forget whether I ever heard.

There were fifty of us in the boat—five different nationalities. As I was the only one who could speak the five different languages, I was elected ship's patron, an office which differs from that of captain in that the latter commands every one on board a vessel, while the former carries out what his companions decide.

"I see plainly to what this subtle distinction will lead," dryly observed the chair. "Some one else will have to bear the blame for whatever misdeeds the 'ship's-patron' committed."

I am compelled to admire the honorable gentleman's keen perceptions, returned the prisoner in his most deferential manner. In this case, however, they are at fault; neither the ship's company nor its patron did anything which deserved yard-arm punishment.

Our intention, when we left the ship was to land in Florida, or the Philippines, and there found a new republic. But more than one unlooked-for hindrance prevented us from carrying out the plan. Hardly had the "Alcyona" disappeared from view, when a dead calm settled down on us; it was so still the sails hung in heavy folds from the yards; we could make progress, and that only very slowly, when we employed the oars.

The calm continued for two days, during which not a breath of air wrinkled the surface of the ocean.

"Didn't you say you had taken all the provisions on the ship?" inquired the chair.

"Yes, your honor, but 'all' was only the one-half of 'many,' and exactly the one-tenth of 'enough.' Even had there been 'many,' we had 'more' hungry mouths, and to take plus from minus is not permissable in Algorithm."

"And it can't be done," authoritatively interposed the prince. "You can't take eight from seven unless you borrow. From whom did you borrow, prisoner?"

"From a crab-fisher we met, your highness. "During a calm, the large sea-crabs are more easily taken than at other times."

The honorable gentlemen of the court will have learned from natural history the peculiar characteristics of the sea-crab, which is of all living creatures—the human being not excepted—the most timorous. When a crab hears thunder or cannonading, he immediately flings off one of his huge claws, in order that he may escape more quickly.

Crab-fishers know this, and have made a compact with all warships, by which the latter have agreed to refrain from firing off cannon when in sight of a crabbing vessel. This is the reason all such vessels have a large red crab painted on their sails. The compact also obliges the fishers to deliver half of their catch to any warship they may meet on the high seas.

Consequently when we came in sight of the crabber we signalled for our share of his catch. We had

eaten all our dried fish, and were on half-rations of biscuit.

"Oho!" called the fisher when he came near enough to distinguish the character of our craft. "How can you demand crabs of me? You aren't a warship."

"But we are hungry, and have a cannon on board. You know the result of a cannon-shot during a calm!"

This threat brought the argument to a conclusion; the crabber, according to seaman's custom, shared his catch with us.

"If," interposed the prince in a thoughtful manner; "If it was according to seaman's custom it cannot be termed 'piracy.'"

"No, certainly not!" ironically appended the chair. "It cannot be termed piracy—only an act of playfulness—a bit of frolic! But, let us hear what other pranks the band of fifty played with their cannon? I will spread the map here on the table, so that I may follow the course of your boat. I fancy I shall be able to tell from that whether you and your fellows comported yourselves as honest seamen or thievish pirates."

There was an almost imperceptible twitch of the prisoner's left eyelid when the mayor concluded his remark, and spread the map on the table in front of him.

In the neighborhood of the Marquesas Islands, honorable gentlemen, we fell in with a Spanish ship loaded with coffee. The captain, in response to our petition, supplied us with coffee, chocolate, and honey. This enabled us to continue our journey; we sailed toward the Aleutians, and met on our way a Russian

merchantman, the owner of which took pity on us, and gave us several barrels of good brandy and salted fish.

When we were near the island of Yucatan our provisions again gave out, and we were compelled to borrow from an Italian trader some sago-palm, flour and several boxes of sultanas.

"What need had you of sultanas?" inquired the chair.

Sultanas are not women, your honor, but dried grapes, which are packed in boxes. When a man is starving he will eat anything! In the neighborhood of Barbados a Turkish vessel very kindly gave us a supply of pickled pork; and the captain of a Chinese junk we fell in with near the Canary Islands, was friendly enough to share his wine with us.

When off Madagascar, a Greek captain loaded our boat so generously with *rahut rakum,* it almost foundered under the weight; and when near Terre del Fuego we—

"Hold! stop!" screamed the chair thumping with both fists on the map. "If I wanted to make an accurate diagram of your course, I should have to tie a thread to the leg of a grasshopper and let him loose on a blank sheet of paper! A courier on horseback could not have made such twists and turns!"

"We did travel in a sort of zig-zag fashion," admitted the prisoner deprecatingly; "but, you see, none of us understood navigation. Besides, our charts were not accurate, and our compass full of whims."

"Must have been a feminine compass!" jocosely remarked his highness.

"To tell the truth, honorable gentlemen, I am not

quite certain if the names I have given you are the ones properly belonging to the portions of the globe we visited. The excellent custom which obtains in all civilized regions, of posting the names of places at the street-corners, had not yet reached those remote corners. I can assure you, however, that we really met all the ships I have mentioned, as we were forced to beg our way over the limitless ocean."

"Beg your way!" sarcastically interrupted the chair. "It seems to me that fifty determined men, with small arms and a cannon, and a boat as swift as yours might have overtaken almost any other craft afloat."

"We did overtake a good many, your honor, and all of them very willingly shared their provisions with us when they saw we were in distress."

"Do you remember meeting a merchantman from Bremen?"

"Don't I? Don't I remember the generous gentleman! We met him near the Cape of Good Hope. That point of land hasn't got its name for nothing! It brought 'good hope' back to us! We were in tatters; the stormy weather; long voyage; and many hardships had reduced our frames to skeletons, our clothing to rags. When the brave man—blessed be his memory! —came up with us, and saw our nakedness, he took off his own coat and gave it to me—may heaven's blessings rest on him wherever he may be!"

"He tells quite a different story," responded the chair. "On his return home, he complained to the Hansa League that a boat load of pirates was sailing the high-seas, plundering, and levying contributions,

from all vessels it met. He also related how the pirates had taken all his, as well as his crew's clothing. This must be true; for no Bremen trader has ever been known willingly to give coat of his to anyone. Bremen is not far away. We can summon the complainant—whose name, I believe, is Schulze—and let him tell his story here—"

"May I beg that your honor"—quickly interposed the prisoner—"will at the same time summon the witnesses who will testify for me? They are, the Spanish merchant Don Rodriguez di Saldayeni, from Badajos; the Russian captain, Bello Bratanow Zwonimir Tschinowink, from Kamtschatka; the Italian, Signor Sparafucile Odoards, from Palermo; the Turk, Ali Baba Ben Didimi Effendi, from Brusa; the Chinese mandarin, Chien-Tsen-Triping-Van, from Shanghai; the Greek, Heros Leonidas Karaiskakis, from Tricala; the—"

"Enough! enough!" roared the mayor clapping his hands to his ears. "I don't want to hear another name. Rather will I believe every word you say! You were sea-beggars, impoverished voyagers—anything but pirates! Will your highness permit us to erase also this indictment from the register?" The prince assenting, his honor added: "Now we will hear how the crime of cannibalism will be disposed of."

"I will first take the liberty to remind the honorable gentlemen of the court, that anthropophagy is not at all times considered a capital crime. The inhabitants of the Fiji Islands look upon it as the only proper method to dispose of a captured foe. The eating of human flesh is a part of the religious cult of the Mexi-

cans; and during the Tartar invasion of Hungary, the people—as Rogerius proves—who had been robbed of the necessaries of life, were forced to eat each other. To such a condition of starvation we were also reduced, a fearful hurricane having compelled us, while on the Pacific ocean, to throw overboard all our stores in order to prevent the boat from sinking—"

"Now you are telling another story," thundered the chair. "You say you were on the Pacific ocean. If it is a *pacific* ocean how is it posible that such a storm as you describe raged there? You shall be bound to the wheel, if you don't confess at once that hurricanes never rage on the Pacific Ocean."

Your honor is right—my memory served me ill—there are no such storms on the Pacific Ocean. But there are sharks. The voracious beasts surrounded our boat in such numbers that, in order to prevent them from eating us, we gave them all our provisions, hoping to fall in with a kind-hearted captain who would replenish our larder. But we didn't meet a single ship. For two whole weeks we managed to keep alive by eating our boots, and not until the last pair had been devoured, did we decide to resort to the "sailor's lunch," and cast lots which of us should be served up as such.

My name was drawn, and I made up my mind to die calmly—*pro bono publico.* But, when I began to remove my clothes, the Spaniard to whom I had been chained on the "Alcyona," and for whom I entertained the affection of a brother, stepped forward and said:

"You shall not die, brave rajah. You have a wife—

nay, two of them, to whom your life is valuable. Here am I—your brother, who will consider it a privilege, an honor—as did the brave Curtius when he galloped into the abyss to save the republic—to fling myself into these hungry throats!"

With these words the noble fellow drew his sword, severed his head from his body and laid it before us.

"Did you eat any of him?"

"I was starving, your honor."

"That establishes your crime. The punishment for eating a body endowed with a human soul is death at the stake, you—"

"Hold," interposed the prince. "What portion of the Spaniard's body did you consume, prisoner?"

"His foot, your highness."

"Has the human foot a soul?"

"Why, certainly," answered the chair. "How frequently do we hear: 'His sense or his courage are in his knees'—sense and courage cannot exist without a soul. And, don't we say: 'Honest from his crown to his toes'—whereby we establish that even the toes possess a soul.'"

"These are merely phrases—maxims," returned the prince. "If the soul extends to the extremities, then the man who has a foot amputated loses a portion of his soul also; and it might happen, that one-quarter of a human soul would go to paradise, and the other three-quarters to hades—which it is absurd to suppose could be the case. To my thinking this is so important a question, that only the faculty of theology is capable of deciding it. Until those learned gentlemen have

delivered an opinion on the subject, we cannot go on with this case. Therefore, the prisoner is remanded to his cell until such decision shall arrive."

A week was the time required by the learned faculty to discuss the questions: "Does the soul extend to the extremities of the human body?"

If not, just where does it terminate?

The decision was as follows:

"The soul extends to the knees—for this reason man is required to kneel when he prays. Consequently, that portion of the human frame below the knees is a soulless appendage."

"Then," decided the prince, when this decision was read to him, "the indictment for cannibalism may also be stricken from the register."

# PART X.

## UXORICIDE.

### CHAPTER I.

### THE SECUNDOGENITUR.

Although my crime has been most generously condoned by your highness, I have not escaped punishment for it. I have suffered severely. After partaking of the unnatural food, all in the boat were seized with frightful convulsions, similar to those exhibited by a dog afflicted with rabies.

The smallest particle of the accursed food is sufficient to make a man experience all the tortures of purgatory. I dare say the reason my sufferings were not so severe as those of my comrades, I ate only the foot. They foamed at the lips; their eyeballs burst from the sockets; they bit each other, and rent and tore their own flesh. They bellowed, roared, and whined, as dogs do at the moon. Many of them sprang at once into the water and were devoured by sharks.

When my worst torture passed, my limbs became cold and rigid as stone; it was the marasmus. I could see, and hear, but I could neither feel nor move. The

fierce sun beating on my face threatened to burn out my eyes, but I could not lift my hands to cover them. To seize the horizon and draw it up to the zenith would have been an easier task than to close my eyelids over the burning eyeballs.

Yet, amid all this horrible pain, I had the feeling as if a faint zephyr from fluttering wings were sweeping across my cheek. It was the white dove perched on my shoulder, my beautiful white dove, who was come to me again in my hour of direst need! She tried with her outstretched wings to shield my face from the scorching sun, and the blessed shadow brought such relief that I was at last able to close my eyes in sleep.

How long and whither the dismasted and rudderless boat drifted; whether it touched any shore—I cannot remember. I don't know what happened during my madness.

My comrades in misfortune were lost; some drowned themselves to end their agony; some died a horrible death in the boat. I alone was saved by a heavenly providence for further trials. The drifting boat was found by an Indian merchantman bound for Antwerp, and the noble Christians aboard of her, believing life not yet extinct in my miserable body, worked over me until they brought back the soul to its earthly tenement.

I forgive every enemy I have in the world; but my benefactor on that Indian merchantman, who brought me back to life, I never can forgive. Had he cast me into the waves instead of resuscitating me, I should now be ambergris, for, as the honorable gentlemen

know, that valuable substance develops in the stomach of a shark, and I should have been devoured by one of those voracious beasts. Instead of a wretched criminal on trial for his many misdeeds, I should now, had I been allowed to become ambergris, be swinging in a censer perfuming the altar of a church. The care I received on board the Indiaman fully restored my strength, and when we arrived in the harbor in Holland there was no trace about me of the many hardships I had endured.

I could hardly wait until I got back to Nimeguen to see my dear wife and child. The child would be running about now—perhaps the mother had taught it to call me by name!

How happy I should be to be home again!—no captain, no rajah, but a father.

Not the consort of a Begum, but the husband of my wife. I blessed the fate which had delivered me from the land of lions, tigers and serpents. Had not I a tulip garden worth all the wealth of India?

I turned night to day in order to reach home as quickly as possible, and sent mounted estafets in advance to announce my coming. My wife, who had increased in weight fully twenty-five pounds, had a splendid repast prepared for me; and flung her arms around my neck when I alighted from the carriage.

After our first transports of joy were over, my first words were:

"Now, where is my child?"

"There they come," replied my wife, pointing, with a beaming countenance, toward two nurse-maids who

were descending the staircase. One of the maids led by the hand a little toddling lad; the other carried an infant in long clothes on her arm.

"What—what does that mean?" I stammered, pointing toward the smaller child.

"That is your second born, you silly fellow!" replied my wife, smiling affectionately.

"My second born?" I exclaimed in amazement. "Why, I have been absent for nearly three years."

"Have you forgotten Maimuna and Danesh?" she whispered, hiding her blushing face on my breast. "Have you forgotten our meeting in the palace on Ararat?"

"Maimuna and Danesh?—*Himmelkreuzelement*!" I exclaimed, unable to suppress the forcible expletive.

My wife, however, was roused to anger by it. Did I presume to doubt her fidelity? she demanded in no gentle accents. Had she not in her possession ample proof that she was true to me? Had she not my own letter, in which I related at length the circumstances of our meeting on Ararat, whither we had been taken by the two genii? Was a better proof required than the lingam I had given her at that meeting—also the fragment of stuff with gold dragons woven in it? And, if it was true that I was a king at the time of our meeting on the mountain, then the infant on the maid's arm must be a prince!

"Woman," I returned in a severe tone, "this is not a matter for jest. Visions are not real. That I dreamed a delightful dream I admit; but this squalling brat is no dream! On the contrary, he is a very disagreeable

reality! I'll go at once to the burgomaster! I'll denounce you to the arch-bishop! I'll summon the consistory! I will not allow myself to be made a fool of!"

"Very well," retorted my wife, "go to the burgomaster—go to the arch-bishop—summon the consistory, make a tremendous ado, and you will prove yourself a greater fool than I believed you!"

I carried out my threat and rushed to the burgomaster's residence. He was still asleep, but I dragged him out of bed, and told him the French were coming to attack the town. That drove slumber from his eyes; and I proceeded to lay my complaint before him. He kept yawning the while so dreadfully that I feared he might swallow me before I got through with my story.

When I concluded, he deliberated several minutes, then said I should come again the next day—he would have to think over the matter.

I was forced to go back to my wife. I couldn't help myself, for I hadn't a groschen to my name, and the Nimeguen inns will not receive a guest unless he pays in advance for his entertainment.

To my shame therefore I was compelled to go home, and now it was my wife who raged and scolded. She said I might complain as much, and to whomsoever I wanted, it would benefit me nothing. If I did not accept the situation with a good humor, mine would be the loss—and so on.

I bore her taunts, and revilings, in silence, for I felt great need of supper and rest; but I said to myself: "There is a tomorrow—I'll have my revenge then!"

The next day I went again to the burgo-master; he was able to keep awake this time.

He asked me if he should speak to me as to a Nimeguen gunner, or an East Indian sovereign?

"As to an Indian rajah," I replied.

"Very good!—also: Sublime Maharajah, nabob, or Shah—whichever is the proper title—be seated." My title permitted me to put on my hat, while respect for it obliged the burgomaster to remove his office cap. He continued: "Be kind enough to answer the following questions: How many wives does the law permit an Indian sovereign to marry? How many elephants, camels, rhinoceroses, male and female genii, and other draught cattle, is he allowed to employ in his service?"

I saw what would be the result if I answered these questions, so I said instead:

"I beg pardon, your honor, but, on second thought, I believe I would rather have you speak to me as to a gunner of Nimeguen—according to European custom."

"Very good again—also. You gunner-fellow, take off your hat this instant!" he commanded, at the same time placing the cap on his head. "As it is contrary to our Christian laws to take a second wife while the first is still alive, I shall pronounce you guilty of bigamy, the punishment for which is the pillory first, and the galleys afterward."

This did not suit me either, so I interrupted:

"May I beg that you will speak to me as to an Indian sovereign?"

I put on my hat, but the burgomaster did not again remove his cap. He said:

"You had command of a province, and a pair of flying genii; therefore, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that you and your first wife were borne through the air to the meeting-place on the mountain you mention. That being settled, what else do you complain of? Have you lost anything?"

"No, your honor, quite the contrary; I have found something; a son I did not expect."

"Is the child living?"

"He is."

"Well—if he is living, he is alive. That which is, cannot be denied—it is a fact, and that which is a fact cannot be termed fiction—"

This ridiculous un-reasoning angered me, and I interrupted him, whereupon there ensued a war of words that raged furiously until it culminated in an exchange of blows.

The case was not one for a mere burgomaster to decide; I would submit it to the consistory. I did not know then what I had undertaken!

All Nimeguen is related; its citizens are cousins or brothers-in-law, and withal exceedingly moral. If it so happens that any one of them commits an indiscretion, all the rest take great pains to conceal the misdeed. I don't mean that it is never mentioned in private; but there is not a court of law in the land that could summon a witness who would admit that he, or she, knew

anything about the matter. In my case, servants, neighbors, citizens, all averred that my wife was the pattern of fidelity; that she had not been known to leave her house, only when she went to confession and to church; that she had not even bought a new cap during my entire absence.

Consequently, my accusations were ridiculous, and wholly without foundation.

Her defense had a powerful base to rest on. There was the letter written by my own hand on Chinese palm-paper, describing our meeting in the palace on Mount Ararat, and attested by the bonzes, who, as everybody knows, are learned men, and as worthy of trust as any member of our chapter-house.

Consequently, there must be such fairies as Maimuna and Danesh, else the bonzes would not have testified to their existence. If there were no such creatures in Europe, it was because the climate was too severe. There are no elephants in Holland, yet no one would deny their existence elsewhere—not even the man who had never seen one, would deny that they roamed the jungles of India! Moreover, is there not mention made in the Holy Scriptures of a chariot of fire journeying with a passenger through the air? And did not Jonah make a voyage on the ocean, in the stomach of a whale?

If holy men could make such journeys, why should anyone deny that the genii Maimuna and Danesh had carried a man and his wife to the palace on Mount Ararat?—especially as both man and wife had desired

the meeting, whereas Jonah had never expressed the least desire to enter the whale's belly.

Added to this evidence, my wife possessed in the lingam absolute proof of my having been with her on Ararat—also the fragment of dragon-cloth, the like of which was not to be found in all Europe—all irrefragable proofs!

You may guess that the consistory did not hesitate long to deliver an opinion.

Although it was almost impossible to believe that so remarkable a journey could have been accomplished a respectable and pious lady had really travelled from Nimeguen on the wings of an East Indian Jinnee, at night, to Mount Ararat, and back in the morning.

Also: It was not at all likely that the said respectable and pious lady, the former widow of a captain, wife of a gunner, and consort of an Indian rajah, would demean her respectable station, and inflict a stain on her wedded fidelity. Therefore, the woman accused of adultery was guiltless; and the father of the *surculi masculi* found at home by the returned gunner, was no other than he, the *nuptiæ demonstrant.* And with this decision I was forced to be satisfied, also with my wife and the infant.

Here, the prince laughed so heartily that he burst a button from his collar.

"An amusing story, by my word!" he exclaimed. "I would not have missed it for a riding-horse! Ha, ha—to decide that a vision really happened because the dreamer wrote an account of it—ha, ha, ha!"

"And did everything really happen as you related it?" inquired the chair.

Everything—I give my word of honor—what am I saying? Not by my honor, but by the rope around my neck, I swear that everything happened just as I told you. You may apply to the authorities of Nimeguen, who will substantiate my account. Because of its remarkable character, the case is recorded in the chronicles of the city. This will explain the deed I was forced to commit afterward.

"We will hear you confess it tomorrow," said the prince.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE QUICKSANDS.

My case had been decided by the consistory. I was not the first man who had had such an experience; and I was philosophical enough to conclude that if other men had survived their disgrace, I might also.

So, I made up my mind to forgive my wife, and live amicably with her. I acted as if nothing had happened to mar the relations between us, and all would have been well, had not my neighbors tormented me beyond endurance.

I became furious every time I went into the street. Everybody saluted me as "your majesty." They would inquire how I was getting on with my crowns—as if I had a dozen! One man would ask me if I had seen a Maimuna lately; another would tell me he had seen a stork with a baby in its bill fly through the air. I received scurrilous letters through the post, and bands of singers would stop under my window and chant my shameful history from beginning to end. In short, everything those Nimeguen citizens could invent to annoy me was done. I boiled with rage, for I was unable to defend myself.

In any other community I could have defended myself from such persecution. I should have challenged the first one who insulted me, and run him

through with my sword. That is an effective way to silence scurrilous tongues. In Nimeguen, however, it would have been impossible to find a second to deliver a challenge; and if I had sent it by a messenger the challenged person would have hastened at once to the burgomaster to complain that I had threatened to murder him.

If I had tweaked the nose of a fellow for refusing to give me satisfaction, he would have sued me; and I would have been sentenced to pay three marks for a nose-tweak, and six for a slap on the mouth. This would have resulted in my spending nearly all my time in the burgomaster's office, because of the numerous summons to answer the charge of assault and battery, and my wife would have been kept busy paying the fines.

At last, I could endure it no longer. I told my wife I should have to go away, and she decided that we would go together to Vliessingen, where she would drink the medicinal waters.

I was glad enough to accompany her. I would have gone anywhere to be rid of my tormenters. But I was mistaken in believing I should be rid of them at Vliessingen. I received anonymous letters by every post; but I paid no heed to them until one day I received the following:

"What a stupid fellow you are! Your wife does not need a jinnee to carry her where she wants to go. You are her Maimuna; and Vliessingen is the Ararat whither Danesh has transported her lover. He has sent her a red velvet cap trimmed with gold braid

and white lace, and every time she wears it, she signals to him that you will be away from home that day. Oh, stupid dolt that you are!"

This was more than enough.

My wife had received just such a cap as was described in the letter; and when she put it on, it always seemed to me that she looked happier.

I began to find fault with the cap. I begged her not to wear it, or at least not to go out doors when she had it on. But she persisted in wearing it, and ridiculed my anger, until I got to hate the sight of the red cap.

One day I was obliged to go to Antwerp on business. My wife insisted on accompanying me part of the way, as I should have to walk a considerable distance from the baths to take a conveyance.

Something—my white dove mayhap—whispered in my ear not to let her go with me; that it would be better for both of us if she remained at home.

But she had set her head on going, and nothing could prevent it. And she put on the red cap!

I remonstrated with her about wearing it, but she laughed at me and said:

"You silly fellow! Of whom are you jealous, here in this sandy desert? Of the gulls, perhaps?—or the moles?"

Are the honorable gentlemen of the court familiar with that region? No?

Then it will be necessary to describe it, in order that what I relate may appear clear to you.

The entire country thereabout is an arid waste, a

seemingly illimitable stretch of sand dunes, and brackish pools, partly grown with brown reeds, broom and heath, but so stunted that the horns of the cattle grazing there are plainly seen. The herders are obliged to wear long stilts. This uninhabited territory is separated by a dike several feet in height from the downs, which is a fearful region.

There, earth and water are combined against man and beast; the two life-dispensing elements have become agents of death. The sand blown from the shore of the sea settles on the deep pools and dries. No plants grow there, and woe to the man or beast that strays on to the downs from the dike, or the heath beyond. The sand will sink beneath the feet of the incautious wanderer; if he draws up one foot, the other will sink yet deeper. At first, the instability of the earth amuses him; he fancies that, when he shall tire of the amusement, it will be easy enough to leave the place.

But the sand into which he is slowly but surely sinking is bottomless. Inch by inch the unfortunate victim is swallowed—as is the dove in the jaws of the serpent. Not until he has sunk to his waist, does despair seize him, and he realizes that escape is impossible. Every effort to extricate himself is futile—he only sinks the deeper into the treacherous sand.

In vain he shouts for help. No help will come to him, for, he that hears despairing cries from the downs, will flee in the opposite direction to get beyond reach of the sound, knowing well that were he to attempt to

rescue the sinking wretch he too would be engulfed in the quicksand.

When the victim's head has vanished beneath the surface, only a funnel-shaped depression marks the spot where a living creature has met death, and this sign will be obliterated by the first wind that blows across the sands.

As I have mentioned before, a dike, with a road along its summit, divides the treacherous quicksands and the grazing cattle.

It was along this dike-road that my wife and I walked arm in arm the morning I started for Antwerp.

"You see, my love," I said to her, "how happy we are together when there is no one to disturb us. I should want for nothing else on earth if you would but promise not to wear that red cap again."

"And I," she returned, "need only to wear this red cap in order to make me perfectly contented and happy."

"Very well, then wear it—wear three red caps, one over the other, only don't wear this one while I am away from you."

"Well—I won't wear it while you are away."

"Swear that you won't?"

"No, I will not swear not to wear it, for if I should forget my oath, and put the cap on, then I should perjure myself—and no cap is worth that!"

"Then the cap is dearer to you than I am?" I asked.

"Do you hate the cap so much that you hate me because I wear it?" she inquired in turn.

"I have just cause to hate this cap, and I don't want to hate you for the same reason. Promise not to wear it while I am away."

"No, I will not promise—you must not be so quarrelsome."

"I will show you why you ought not wear it. Here, read this letter I received from Nimeguen."

I took the letter from my pocket, and gave it to her. Her face took on the hue of her cap as she read, and when she had finished, she stamped her foot, tore the letter into bits and flung them over the downs, exclaiming:

"Now, I shall wear the cap for spite."

"No, you shall not wear it," I cried, beside myself with rage.

I tore the cap from her head and flung it after the letter. What followed, the honorable gentlemen of the court will be able to conjecture after I have described my wife's figure and disposition.

In Holland, as well as in some other portions of the globe, married people occasionally disagree; but I believe that only in Holland is it the husband who goes to a justice of the peace with a blackened eye to substantiate a complaint against his wife.

My spouse was no exception to her fellow-countrywomen. Taller by half a head than I, broad-shouldered and with a powerful chest, she could hold at arm's length a small child seated on her hand—and it was a hand, too, that would render superfluous a *visam repertum,* if it came in contact with a human face!

And from this amazon I had dared to snatch a favorite cap, and toss it on the quicksands. As I flung the cap away, the woman threw herself against me like an enraged elephant, and sent me staggering backward to the edge of the embankment, where I turned a somersault down into one of the bitter, natron-impregnated pools on the heath, in which not even a leech can exist.

I had fallen with my head in the water; it sank to the chin in the slimy mud at the bottom, and had it not been for my presence of mind, I should have drowned; for the most expert swimmer will forget his skill if he finds his eyes, nose, mouth and ears filled with mire—and mire, too, that burns and stings like nettles.

I managed with great difficulty to wriggle out of the pool, but I could see neither sky nor earth for several minutes. It took considerable time to cleanse the mire from my mouth, nose, eyes and ears; and it was hours before I could hear again.

I felt like one resuscitated from drowning; my entire body burned as if I were covered from crown to sole with a vesicatory. Then I began to think of what might have happened while I was sitting on the heath ridding myself of the mire.

I could not see my wife anywhere on the embankment. What had become of her?

I was compelled to wade through the pools a considerable distance, in order to get back to the dike-road, for the embankment where I had fallen over was too steep to be climbed.

Therefore, a half hour or more passed before I stood again on the dike-road looking about for my wife. She was nowhere in sight on the road. Then I turned toward the sands, and what I saw there caused the blood to curdle in my veins—the foolish woman had gone after her cap!

She had it on her head, which, with her two arms, was all that was visible of her body above the sands. It was a horrible sight. Her staring eyes were fixed on me in accusation, her hands battled vainly with the empty air, her lips were open, but no sound issued forth. She was still alive, but entombed.

I thought of nothing but saving her. I sprang down the embankment, but when the sinking woman saw me coming toward her, she began to beat the sand furiously with her hands, as if she were trying to prevent my approach. I could not have saved her. I had made but fifty steps toward her when I too began to sink. Recognizing the futility of further effort on my part, I flung myself face down on the sand, that my entire weight might not rest on my feet, and thus I managed to propel my body slowly, painfully, toward the stable earth.

A seemingly endless time elapsed before I reached the foot of the embankment, and all the while there was a sound in my ears as of waves dashing against rocks, each wave crying hoarsely: "Curse you!" "Curse you!"

When at last, dripping with ice-cold perspiration and quivering with horror, I reached the top of the dike, I

"Thus I managed to propel my body slowly, painfully toward the stable earth"

could see only the red velvet cap on the sands; and as I looked, a sudden gust of wind sweeping up from the sea, seized it and bore it toward me.

Overcome by terror I turned and fled like a madman down the road. All day long I continued my flight over pathless wastes; through withered copses, which had been destroyed by frequent inundations; across marshes filled with croaking frogs, and nesting storm-petrels; the lurking place of weasels and others, and from every corner I heard voices calling after me: "Murder!" "Murder!" The frogs croaked it from the water, the birds piped it from the air. The withered trees moaned it, and stretched their branches threateningly toward me; and the briars trailing along the ground caught at my feet and cried: "Stop, stop! let me bind you, murderer!"

All things animate and inanimate joined in accusing me; and at last a wall rose before me to hinder further flight.

It was only a broken dike; but to me it seemed a prison. Foot-sore and weary, I lay down amid the stones fallen from the wall. They were covered with thick moss, and it was a relief to stretch my tired limbs among them.

I began to collect my scattered senses, to think calmly over what had happened, and after awhile I began to excuse myself to the frogs and the petrels, the moles and the sparse-branched withered trees that stood around me staring at me as if they would say:

"Come, murderer, decide which of us will best suit you."

I defended myself: "I am not a murderer; I am not going to hang myself. I did not lay a finger on the woman—it was she who thrust me over the dike into a pool where I nearly drowned. She was foolish enough to go where certain death awaited her—she alone is to blame!"

"But, why did you throw her cap on the sands?" questioned the frogs, the storm-birds, and the moles. "Had not I a right to do it? Hadn't I a right to prevent her from wearing the cap which disgraced her and me? Had not she brought dishonor on me once before? Was I to permit it a second time? By throwing the cap away I was only defending my honor and her virtue. I did not kill her—she alone is to blame for her death!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" sneered every animate creature. "Ha, ha, ha!" scoffed the breeze sweeping over the moor. No one—nothing in the wide world took sides with me. The elements were against me; every human being on the globe—large, small, white, black, olive-hued—all were against, me. Cities, towns, villages; houses palaces, huts—all were my enemies; I must flee from every human habitation.

And yet, I am not guilty. All the world will say that I am. My wife will be missed; she was seen going away in my company; her cap will be found beside the dike. It will be said that I murdered her, and thrust her body into the quicksands.

I am not my wife's murderer. Did no one see her thrust me over the dike? Will no one testify for me?

A fluttering wing brushed my cheek:

"Ah, my white dove! Are you there? *You* will speak for me. You will tell all the world that I am innocent—that I did not murder my wife?"

Filled with hope and joy, I turned my eyes toward my shoulder. The white dove was not perched there, but a coal black raven, and he croaked:

"Thou didst it!"

"At last," exclaimed the mayor as he shook the ink from the pen with which he had authenticated the protocol. "At last we have a confession that cannot be rendered invalid by a pharasaical *referrata mentalis!* At last the executioner will get something to do! *Uxoricidium aequale:* quartering, *praecedente:* the right hand to be severed from the wrist."

"I don't agree with your honor," interposed the prince. "There is a law that was promulgated by *Sanctus Ladislaus rex*—he was a Hungarian king, to be sure, but he is a saint for all that; and because he was canonized his law is held sacred by all christendom; it reads something like this: 'If a man finds his wife guilty of infidelity, and takes her life, he is answerable to God alone for the deed—' "

"Of course!" angrily exclaimed the chair, "I'll warrant the knave never dreamed that *Sanctus Ladislaus rex* would drag him by the hair of his head out of limbo!—Let it be added to the rest of the miracles performed by Saint Ladislas!"

# PART XI.

## IN SATAN'S REALM.

### CHAPTER I.

### THE SATYRS.

Not until the shadows of night had settled around me did I learn into what an accursed region I had strayed. It was the notorious "*kempenei*"—the rendezvous of witches and all evil spirits.

When it became quite dark, the jack-o'-lanterns began to flit over the moor—as if the witches were dancing a minuet; and suddenly I heard a tumult of shrieks and yells, and looking upward I beheld the most repulsive lot of females it has ever been the lot of man to see.

They had hairy chins; and huge warts on their noses. They came rushing through the air, seated on the shoulders of pallid-faced male forms. Each hag hung her mount by the bridle around his neck to a limb of one of the dead trees, and clapped her heels three times together before she descended to the ground. Then the witches held a council, and each one detailed

the evil she had perpetrated the past twenty-four hours. I heard one say boastfully:

"I sent an angry woman running after her cap, which her husband had thrown on the quicksands, and I let her sink to her death. The man escaped—"

Here her sister-witches fell on her and beat her with switches, because she had allowed a man to escape from her.

"Let me alone! Let me alone!" she shrieked. "I'll find him yet—he won't get away from me a second time!"

Terror seized me anew. I shuddered, and pressed as closely as possible into my mossy bed.

Then the hags began to arrange their plans for the next day. They would send the "Bocksritter" to attack a caravan that was coming to Antwerp.

I had heard a good deal about the Bocksritter, a mounted band of ferocious robbers, who looked like satyrs, and were in league with Satan. They were even more to be dreaded than the Haidemaken. When the satyrs committed an extensive robbery, they took good care not to let a single one of their victims escape alive —not even the infant in its cradle. They left no one to witness against them; and, as they fled at once to another country, it was impossible to learn anything about them. Where they committed their depredations and the officers of the law failed to find trace of them, it was concluded, and naturally, that the Bocksritter were a myth, and the story of their depredations an idle fable.

When the witches had decided their plans for the next day, the most hideous of the hideous crew began to peer about her, and sniff the air.

"I smell something!" she exclaimed; "something that doesn't belong here."

"It smells like a human being," said a second, also sniffing around her.

"Ha, if only it were the fellow who escaped me this morning!" with a snort exclaimed a third. "It wouldn't take me long to prepare him for a bridle"—she glanced as she concluded toward the pallid creatures hanging on the trees.

I pressed still further into the moss and ferns; but the raven on my shoulder began to flutter his wings, as if to attract the witches' attention.

"Some one is hiding over yonder!" they cried as with one voice. "Come on, sisters, let's tickle him!"

I heard them approach my hiding place, and in my despair I cried out:

"If God be with me, who can be against me!"

Hardly had the words left my lips when I received a blow on the ear from the raven's wing that made it tingle, but the witches had scattered in all directions, uttering frightful yells. When I lifted my head to look after them, the wind sweeping over the moor was driving before it the glimmering jack-o'-lanterns, which looked like a fleeing troop of torch-bearing soldiers.

Just then the moon rose above the horizon. It was in the last quarter, by which I knew it must be an hour after midnight.

I rose quickly, and prepared to set about performing the good deed I had determined on; I would hasten to meet the caravan travelling to Antwerp, and tell the leaders of the danger which threatened them from the Bocksritter.

I cast from me every fear that prompted me to avoid my fellow-creatures, and rejoiced that it was in my power to serve them a good turn.

Only after I had proceeded a considerable distance on my errand of mercy did it occur to me that I was unarmed, that I had nothing to defend myself from the wolves which infest that region, but a knife which I carried in a sheath at my side.

On my way, I came upon a slender yew tree—a straight beautiful stem, and hard as iron. I cut it down with my knife, and soon had a cudgel that would serve me well in an emergency. I could brain any wolf that might take a fancy to satisfy his appetite with my carcass.

I found my own hunger growing wolfish toward dawn, and when I came to the highway I looked about for an inn. I saw smoke rising from a chimney not far distant, and made my way toward the house, which proved to be one of entertainment for man and beast.

The inn-keeper, from whom I ordered some bread and cheese, was busy preparing in a large kettle a savory stew of meat and cabbage. I asked him to give me a dish of it, but he said he could not let me have any, as it was for a crowd of people who were coming with a large caravan that morning.

It was true then! I had really seen and heard the witches on the moor. It was not a dream.

I had not long to wait. A tinkling of bells announced the approach of the caravan while I was eating my breakfast.

There were vans and vehicles of all sorts, and all manner of traders; lace merchants, carpet dealers, weavers, goldsmiths, on their way to the fair at Antwerp. They had an escort of soldiers, with red and yellow jackets, and armed with muskets and halberds; also several dragoons with buff waistcoats.

Even the traders were armed with pistols and carbines. All were in high good humor when they entered the inn. The leader of the caravan, a pot-bellied thread dealer, ordered everything that was to be had from kitchen and cellar, and produced from his knapsack a large ham which he shared with some of his companions. Toward the close of the meal, he noticed me, and kindly offered me the gnawed ham-bone.

"Thank you," said I. "In return for this bare bone I will do you a kindness: Take my advice, and don't go any further today; or, if you cannot delay until tomorrow, send a strongly armed troop in advance of your caravan, and let one guard it in the rear, for you are in danger of an attack from the Bocksritter, who will leave your bones as bare as you have left this one you offer me!"

Then I repeated to the entire company what I had heard the witches say. But, a curse rested on me! No one believed me; they laughed at me, ridiculed my "witch-story," said I had dreamed it; and the inn-

keeper threatened to cast me out of his house for trying to bring disrepute on it.

He averred that robbers were unknown in that neighborhood—there were no such disreputable characters anywhere but in Brabant and Spain, where they lurked in subterranean caverns like the marmots. Moreover, who was afraid of robbers? Not he!

The caravan's valiant escort were delighted with the prospect of a skirmish with the notorious Bocksritter —let them begin their attack! Everyone of the rascals would soon find himself spitted on an honest bayonet! There was so much boasting about the escort's prowess that at last I concluded the safest way for me to get to Antwerp would be to join the caravan; which I did.

All went well with us until late in the afternoon, when, as we were passing through a pine forest, the robbers suddenly fell upon us.

They appeared so suddenly that one might almost believe they sprang from the earth. They were masked; their clothing was of black buffalo skin, laced with crimson cord. A black cock's feather adorned every hat.

The first salvo from their muskets laid low at least half of our company; then the villains fell on us with their swords and began a frightful butchery. The leader of the caravan tumbled from his steed before he received an injury, and had I not been in such haste to save my skin, I should have stopped to say to him:

"Why don't you laugh at me now, Mynheer Potbelly?"

But it was no time for jesting. I ran swiftly toward

the road, on the further side of which was a dense growth of young firs, and beyond them a stretch of undulating moorland, where, I imagined, I might effect my escape. The long yew staff I carried served me well; by its aid I could jump from hillock to hillock, and thus make swifter progress than had I been on horseback.

"Let him run!" cried the robber captain, who was distinguished from the rest by the crimson ostrich plume on his hat. "Let him go; we will after him when we have finished here. He won't go very far."

I soon found he was right. I had not gone more than a hundred paces, when I came to a mound from which there was neither retreat, nor advance. It was made up of pebbles, sand and the gravelly soil of the highway, from which a narrow path led to the mound. On all sides were deep ditches filled with stagnant water, rank vines and noxious weeds; so that no one could cross them without risk to life or limb.

I was caught!

Out on the highway, my companions of the caravan were being exterminated to a man. None were allowed to escape.

When the work of carnage was completed there, the butchers turned their attention to me.

I was alone, and defenseless on my islet. The demons came toward me, laughing brutally, and in my despair I laughed too.

I said to myself: "I too will have some fun before I die!"

I loosed the leather belt from my waist, and made a sling of it. Pebbles lay at my feet in plenty for my David's battle with Goliah.

The robbers soon found they had to do with a skilled bombardier; my shots struck them and their horses with a force and regularity that began to tell on their ranks. Many were thrown from their saddles with skulls and ribs crushed.

The fun was not all on their side. Finding at last that I was not to be taken alive, they concluded to use me as a target for their muskets. One of them dismounted, lifted the musket from his shoulder, thrust the bayonet into the ground, and rested the gun on it. After he had arranged the priming in the pan, he called to me:

"Surrender, fellow, or I'll shoot you!"

"Try it," I called back, whirling the sling around my head. "Afterward I'll have a shot at you."

"Do you throw first," he called again.

"No, thank you—you are the challenger; do you shoot first."

He fired, and missed me.

Then I hurled my stone; it struck him on the jaw, and broke off his teeth.

Then a second, and a third, had a try at me without effect, but everyone of my shots inflicted serious injury.

I was not an expert gunner for nothing; I knew that when one is the target for a gunshot, one has but to watch closely when the match is applied to the prim-

ing; if two flashes are seen, then the aim will be faulty, the ball will fly wide of the mark, and it will not be necessary to dodge. If but one flash is seen, then it will be well to step to one side.

I had the advantage of the robbers; for, while they were preparing their muskets to fire, I could hurl five or six stones, and not one of them missed its mark. I hoped that one of the bullets whistling past my ears might hit the raven on my shoulders; but he was too shrewd a bird; he rose in the air, and I could hear the fluttering of his wings above my head.

At last the robbers were obliged to acknowledge that I had the better of them. Only one of them at a time could approach my islet over the narrow path; or wade up to his horse's neck through the weed-entangled morass, and that one would fall an easy prey to my sling.

"Stop!" now cried the wearer of the crimson plume. "This valiant fellow's life must be spared. He will be a valuable addition to our band. Let no one molest him—I will talk with him myself," saying which, he got off his horse, and came toward me unarmed. "Have no fear," he called to me. "You are a brave lad, and just the sort we need. We kill only cowards. If you will join us you shall not rue it."

What could I do? I was a fugitive, excluded from all honest and respectable society. I knew not where to turn. If I refused to join the robbers, I should have to flee from country to country; I might as well fly in company with others. The desire for revenge also prompted me to accept the leader's offer. I would pun-

ish the people who had ridiculed me, and condemned me because of a dream.

"Who are you?" I asked. "Are you Satan? I will not enter into a league with him."

"No, I am not Satan; I am the leader of the Bocksritter. If you will join us, you shall be corporal, and in time you may become the leader."

"Thank you," said I, "but I think I should prefer to remain simply a private. I have heard that the man who leagues himself with the 'satyrs,' binds his body to pain and death; and that he who becomes their leader must bond his soul to the devil—and that I will never do."

"Very well," he growled in response; "I regret to hear so brave a lad decide thus. Then bind yourself only to pain and death."

Our compact was sealed, and I was given the horse and outfit of one of the robbers I had killed in defending myself, and when the black mask had been adjusted over my face, I felt that I had ceased to belong to this world. I had no name—was nobody. I was a satyr, a foe to society. Whatever I might do thenceforth, whatever crime I might commit, no one would hear of it. The mask did not speak! The Bocksritter committed their horrible deeds of pillage and murder in the Netherlands; in Wurtemberg; along the Rhine; in Alsace and Lorraine. In which of them, or in how many, I took part—who can say? The mask does not speak!

Where we roved, what we did, who can say? Not I. Whether the satyrs robbed churches, whether they

destroyed caravans, burned cities, desecrated convents and routed their inmates, plundered mines, devastated estates—who can say?

Whether I assisted at all the crimes they committed, or at only one—or whether I took part in none—who can say?

Was I the satyr that flung back into his burning house the usurious Jew who had escaped from it? or was I the one that rescued a babe from the flames and bore it on his saddle to the mother's arms?

Was I the satyr who placed the mine under the convent and exploded it? or was I the one who warned the nuns in time for them to escape—who can say? The mask does not speak.

"Well," observed the prince, "if you don't know; and the mask won't tell, then this entire chapter of your confession must be eliminated from the index."

Then he added further, in order to propitiate the chair: "Why, don't you see, that the prisoner did not become a satyr of his own free will? That he was forced to join the band under pain of death? If, while he was with the robbers, he committed good deeds, or evil, who—as he says himself—can say?"

"Aye, who indeed?" satirically responded the chair. "The mystery of the whole affair is so clear that no one will be able to say whether this valiant and pious Christian ought to be hanged, or this conscienceless reprobate ought to be canonized!"

## CHAPTER II.

### WITCH-SABBATH.

The satyrs did not ask my name when I joined their band; but bestowed one on me with the mask. They did not select their names from the calendar, but chose the appellations of distinguished satanic personages—as, for instance, there was a Belial; a Semiazaz; a Lucifer; Mephistopholes; Belzebub; Azazel; Samiel; Dromo; Asmodens, Dopziher, Flibbertigibbet, and so on.

The leader was Astaroth; me they called Belphegor, and my "blood-comrade" Behoric.

The way a blood-comradeship was formed was this: The two men slashed their right arms, and each drank of the blood gushing from the arm of the other. This was an alliance of the first degree. A second comradeship was formed by two men pricking their names into each other's arms. Both ceremonies were performed only on witch-sabbath.

Great privileges were associated with blood-comradeship. The comrades shared everything; they belonged to each other. Mine is thine, and thine mine.

If one of them said: I want this, or that; the other had to give it to him.

Whatever one commanded the other had to obey;

and if one comrade wanted to exchange bodies with the other, the latter was obliged to consent and—

"But that is impossible," here interrupted the prince.

"No it isn't," spoke up the chair with like decision, "Johann Magus proves conclusively that such exchanges have been known to take place."

"Well, if it is possible," returned his highness, "I should like, if your honor and I were 'blood-comrades,' to see how we would manage such an exchange! There's room enough in my hide for three like you; but how I could get into yours puzzles me!"

The prisoner proceeded to explain how it might be accomplished:

The entire body undergoes a change; the larger becomes smaller, and *vice versa*; so that an exchange is easily effected. It needs only the consent of both parties. All sorts of complications may arise from such an exchange, though. Suppose I were a bridegroom, and my blood-comrade should suggest an exchange of bodies; or, if I were on my way to the gallows, and I should ask to exchange?

One day the leader of the band said to me:

"Belphegor, you must marry. You will not be a genuine satyr until you are mated with a female member of our band."

"But where are the ladies? I have not yet seen any of them," I asked.

"I have a bride ready for you, my youngest sister Lilith. You shall see her very soon."

I knew that a Lilith had tempted Father Adam to be untrue to Mother Eve; if she and the captain's sister were one and the same, then she must be considerably older than I. So I said:

"Does she wear a mask?"

"Certainly."

"Then I'll marry her!"

And so it was settled that I should become the leader's brother-in-law.

In a subterranean cavern in the Black Forest our wedding was celebrated. The entire company of satyrs were assembled to witness the ceremony, and when the numerous torches were lighted, the cavern looked like an immensely large church with this difference: everything was inverted. The images of the saints stood on their heads; even the crucifix in the chancel was upside down. The organ's base was against the ceiling; the winged cherubs hovered overhead feet upward; the bells swung with the clappers standing upright, and the choir chanted the psalm backward. The priest who performed the ceremony had the most peculiar legs; one was at least a foot shorter than the other; and when an acolyte removed the mitre, the father's head came off with it. Asafoetida instead of incense was burned in the censer.

My bride, whom I saw now for the first time, was robed in garments far more costly and magnificent than any I had ever seen on my regal wife, Sumro Begum. The fine clothes and gew-gaws concealed the contours of her form, and a heavy gold-embroidered veil com-

pletely hid her face. The priest made us repeat the marriage service backward; and when he bade us inscribe our names in the register I took good care to look closely at my wife's hands. They were encased in gloves, but I could see that the finger nails were long and sharp—which did not augur favorably for me should there arise any domestic differences between us.

Her voice was youthful enough; she did not pronounce P like M, from which I concluded that she still had teeth.

We left the church to the music of the organ. I led my bride on my arm to the wagon waiting for us at the entrance to the cavern. It was a large, heavy vehicle, roomy enough for a dozen persons, and harnessed to it were six stag-beetles.

"How in the devil's name are these beetles going to drag such a heavy vehicle?" I cried angrily. "Six horses couldn't move it."

"No, of course they couldn't!" assented my wife. "The axles need greasing. Here, rub some of this ointment on them."

I obeyed, and greased the axles with the contents of an agate box Lilith held in her hand. The entire wedding company now sprang on the wagon, leaving only the driver's seat for me and my bride. Lilith took the reins; the six beetles spread their wings, and off we went—the heavy wagon with its heavier load flying as swiftly and lightly through the air as thistle-down before a gale.

I thought it an excellent chance to get a sight of my

bride's face while both her hands were occupied with the reins, and quickly flung back her veil.

Horror! the blood froze in my veins. They were the repulsive features of the witch I had heard boast on the *kempenei*, that she would catch me yet, and prepare me for the bridle.

Beyond a doubt she was Father Adam's temptress, for there were wrinkles enough on her hideous face to represent the many centuries which had passed since her little affair with the first man; while, for the development of such a moustache from the delicate peach-down, which makes a woman's lips so kissable, would require many a cycle of time!

"I will jump from the wagon!" I cried in terror.

"Better put your arms around me to keep from falling out!" laughed my terrible bride, and then I noticed for the first time that we were at least five hundred feet above the earth.

To force me to adopt her suggestion, Lilith guided the beetles toward the spire of the Cologne Cathedral, against which we struck with such violence that to save myself from tumbling from my seat I had to fling my arm around Lilith's waist, at which the entire company laughed uproariously.

At last, to my great relief, we descended to the earth, and alighted in a lonely forest, at another of the witches' meeting places, where we were greeted by a weird company that assembled from all quarters of the globe. They came through the air, riding on brooms, on chairs, on benches—

"I don't believe a single word of the ridiculous story!" here emphatically exclaimed the prince.

"I do," with equal emphasis affirmed the chair. "Johannes de Kembach has described witches' journeys in almost the same language; and the learned Majolus testifies to the flying wagon, which a servant in mistake greased with witch ointment instead of axle grease. Moreover, a similar tale is related by Torquemada, in his Hexameron—a recognized authority on such matters."

The prisoner continued his confession:

The witches, as I said, came through the air accompanied by their gallants; the demons rose, with their attendants, from the ground. Among the latter were several of the celebrities from whom the satyrs had borrowed the name they bore.

Semiazaz is the jester of the demon-crew, also the musician; and when he plays, all the rest have to dance. His nose is a clarionet; he plays it with his ears instead of his fingers with which he thrums on the skeleton ribs of a cow, as on a harp; and he beats the drum with his tail.

Behoric, my blood-comrade's god-father, is a huge fellow with an elephant's trunk, with which he signs his name. That is why N. P. (*nasu propria*) instead of M. P. (*manu propria*) is always appended to this demon's signature. Behoric is also an elegant cavalier. He wears his tail jauntily over one shoulder, and fans himself, when he gets too warm, with the brush at the tip.

All of the demons, with a single exception, had

wings like a bat. My namesake alone differed in this respect from his fellows. His wings were formed from the quills which have been used on earth to sign and write documents worthy of the infernal regions.

There was the quill used by Pilate to sign the accusation against Jesus Christ, and the release of Barabbas; the quill with which Aretino indited his sonnets; the quill used by Queen Elizabeth to sign Mary Stuart's death sentence; the quill with which Catharine de Medici ordered the horrors of St. Bartholomew's night; the quill with which Pope Leo X. wrote indulgences for money; the quill with which Pope Innocent wrote the words: "*Sint ut sunt aut nou sint;*" the quill with which a distinguished Archbishop wrote his ambiguous answer: "*Reginam occidere nolite timere bonum est;*" the quill that wrote at Shylock's order the contract for a pound of human flesh; the quill used by the mortal foe of the Foscari to write in his book "*La Pagata;*" the quill with which King Philip signed the death warrant of his son; the quill with which Tetzel scrawled his pamphlet attacking Luther—and all the rest of the quills which have been used for such like infamous deeds, were to be found in Belphegor's wings.

They were gigantic wings, too, much longer than those of roc; and whenever Behoric needed a pen he would pluck from them the quill which best suited the document he wanted to sign. After all the demons and witches were assembled they began to plan evil deeds; and my bride being the heroine of the hour, she had the right to offer the first suggestion:

"There is an inn near the '*kempenei*,'" she began, "whose owner is in league with the commandant of Bilsen to counterfeit money, and waylay travellers. The counterfeit money is started into circulation by the inn-keeper, who gives it to the caravans which stop at his house for refreshment, in exchange for the genuine money they leave with him. This publican has become repentant, and wants to atone for his misdeeds. He confessed his criminal practices in a letter to the governor, and told where the commandant fabricated the false coin. This letter I managed to have conveyed to the commandant instead of to the governor, and tonight, the former with his troops is going to pay a visit to the inn. What say you, friends: how many souls shall we send to hell?"

"All of them! All of them!" yelled the witches. "We will have some fun this night! Ho, Lucifer! We await you!"

A terrific noise and rumbling was heard, and the ground opened, as when an earthquake cleaves the crust of the globe. From the abyss rose his infernal majesty, the king of evil, before whom the entire company knelt—or rather squatted on their heels—

"What was he like?" queried the prince.

I cannot answer that question, your highness—and for a very good reason, as will be learned further on. When Lucifer appeared all the witches disrobed—

"Not to the buff?" again interrupted the prince.

Yes, your highness, and further. They took off their skins, too; and when their hideous, wrinkled,

warty hides were stripped off, they were the most beautiful and fascinating fairies.

My Lilith was more transcendently lovely than any image of a goddess I ever saw—she was perfect beauty idealized! Your highness will understand now why I had no eyes for the prince of darkness. I had lost command of my head—for one kiss from Lilith's ravishing lips I would have bonded my soul to the devil.

Behoric, the real demon, for whom my blood-comrade was called, now took a black book from his knapsack, and bade his namesake step forward to be stigmatized. This was accomplished as follows: Behoric plucked a quill from Belphegor's wings, and with the nib made tiny punctures in my comrade's arm, thus forming letters. After making a puncture in the flesh he would make a dot with the bloody quill-point on a page in the black book. When his task was finished, the name "Behoric" gleamed in red letters on my comrade's arm; and in letters of flame on the page in the black book.

The demon then presented to his namesake a thaler, as christening gift; after which, he turned to me, and said I should also receive a thaler if I would allow him to register my name among those of the chosen ones of hell.

Not for a dozen thalers would I have consented; but, for one kiss from my fascinating Lilith, I would have done anything asked of me.

I extended my arm for the stigma; but my blood-comrade stepped up to me and said:

"Comrade, do you see this thaler which I got in exchange for my soul? I want you to give me your bride for it."

As I have told you, a blood-comrade dare not refuse the request made by his fellow. I pocketed the thaler, placed Lilith's beautiful hand in Behoric's palm, and saw them move away to join the dancers.

Behoric and Belphegor now seized my collar, and importuned me to have my name recorded in the black book; but, with the loss of my bride, all desire to join the demon ranks vanished.

In vain I made all sorts of excuses; they would not release me. At last, I cried with simulated anger: "To the devil with you! Not a single member of my family ever was known to sign a contract when sober! I will eat and drink, then I'll talk business with you!"

Hardly had the last word crossed my lips, when before me stood a table loaded with delicious viands, and rare wines. The wedding guests seated themselves around the table, and proceeded to enjoy the repast, but to my extreme disappointment both wines and food were without taste. There was no substance to the former, no savor to the latter.

I began to quarrel with the demons:

"I can't eat this food," I exclaimed irritably. "I can't eat meat without salt."

"Salt?" repeated one of them. "Where should we get salt? There is no ocean in hell."

"But,"—I persisted—"I must have some salt—and if you have to fetch me Lot's wife—"

"Don't scold so, little man," jestingly interrupted Lilith, pulling my mustache. "Here—taste what is on my lips."

"I don't want honey—I want salt," I yelled, pushing her away. "*Donner und Blitz!* Give me salt, or I'll skin Lucifer!"

Now, a curse has the same effect on a demon that a prayer has on an angel.

The younger devils rushed with all speed possible to Lucifer's palace to fetch the only salt-cellar in the infernal regions; it is for the sole use of the king of evil. This salt-cellar is a large mussel-shell and looks like a christening bowl; it is filled with salt collected from the tears shed by penitent sinners who delayed their repentance until it was too late.

Two active little imps dragged the salt-cellar to my side.

"Here's salt at last—God be praised!" I exclaimed in a loud voice.

The next instant the table with its viands disappeared amid an unearthly din, and rumbling as of thunder. The demons sank cursing into the earth; the witches flew yelling into the air, and I fell backward to the ground unconscious.

When I came to my senses, I was lying in a peat bog one hundred and twenty miles from the Black Forest, in which I had celebrated my marriage the night before with the beautiful Lilith.

"Either you are a madman, or you dreamed all this nonsense," in a stern tone observed the prince, at the

conclusion of Hugo's recital. "I don't believe a single word of it."

"Well," commented the chair with less emphasis; "one thing is clear: Among the many lies the rascal has entertained us with for weeks, this last tale is the only one to bear a semblance to the truth. Similar occurrences are related by Majolus, and Ghirlandinus; also by the world-renowned Boccaccio, whose statements no one would think of doubting. *I* say that, for once, the accused has adhered strictly to the truth."

"Very good," decisively responded the prince. "Then, as he did not sign the compact with Satan, he cannot be charged with *pactum diabolicum implicitum*. Consequently, this indictment may also be expunged from the record."

# PART XII.

## THE BREAD OF SHAME.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE MAGIC THALER.

The most convincing proof that everything occurred as I related it, said the prisoner, continuing his confession the next day, was the thaler I found in my pocket, when I came to my senses in the peat bog near the "*kempenei*"—the thaler my blood-comrade gave me in exchange for Lilith. I remembered what I had heard the witches say about the commandant's visit to the inn-keeper and though I had suffered terribly because I had tried once to perform a good deed at his house, I decided to warn him of the danger which threatened him that night.

It was very late in the evening when I drew near the inn; but light still gleamed from the windows, and sounds of merriment came from the open door.

The inn-keeper, who was celebrating his marriage with his fifth wife, recognized me at once. He was not in the least rejoiced to see me again; quite the contrary:

"See!" he called to his friends inside the house, "this is the fellow I told you about—the one who predicted what would happen to the Antwerp caravan. Every word he said came true! He shall not come into my house again. I dare say," he added, speaking to me from the door-way, "I dare say you have another witch-story to tell? Don't you dare to utter one word of your evil prophecies, you bird of evil omen!"

The entire company seized cudgels and chairs and threatened to brain me if I opened my lips.

"Just keep your temper, good people," I returned coolly, "I don't intend to tell you what would be of great benefit to you—your treatment of me is so unfriendly, I shall not say one word—I want nothing from you but some bread and cheese, and a mug of beer: and a bundle of straw in a corner where I may pass the night."

"Have you money to pay for all this?" demanded the inn-keeper.

"Certainly I have;" and I handed him my thaler.

"Ho-ho, fellow, this is a counterfeit," he sneered, tossing the coin to the ceiling and letting it fall on the stone table.

The clear ringing sound was unmistakable—the thaler was genuine. Angered by the insolence of the inn-keeper, I said in a tone, the meaning of which he could not mistake:

"Look here, beer-seller; I want you to understand that *I* am not a circulator of counterfeit money!"

"What!" he roared in a fury; "do you dare to insinuate that *I* circulate counterfeit money? For your

impudence I shall keep this thaler, and have it tested in the city tomorrow; and that you may not run away in the meantime, I shall pen you in my hen-coop."

The entire company helped him to thrust me into the coop, which was so small I could neither stand upright nor lie down in it.

And there I crouched, hungry and thirsty as I had come from the witch-wedding.

Suddenly the early morning quiet was broken by a fanfare in front of the inn. I heard horses' hoofs stamping the earth; loud shouts and curses; and the clank of weapons—the commandant of Bilsen had arrived with his troops.

In a trice the doors were broken open; the startled wedding guests could neither escape nor defend themselves. The soldiers cut down all that came in their way: men, women, old and young. From my hen-coop I witnessed the slaughter, which I cannot describe, for I grow faint with horror if I but think of it.

Not even a dog was left alive about the inn. When the work of butchery was completed one of the soldiers took it into his head to peep into the hen-coop. He saw me, broke the lock with his hatchet, and dragged me out by the hair.

"Don't kill me, comrade," I begged, "I am only a poor soldier like yourself. The inn people took all my money, and penned me in the coop—you can see for yourself that I am not one of them, but a foot-sore wanderer."

"Did they take all your money?" asked the trooper.

"I had only a thaler; the inn-keeper said it was counterfeit, and kept it."

"Let's see if you're telling the truth," said the fellow, beginning to search about my clothes.

"Ha! What's this?" he exclaimed suddenly, holding up the thaler he had found in one of my pockets. "I thought you were lying, you rascal," he added, giving me a blow with his fist, and thrusting my thaler into his pocket.

At that moment another trooper approached, and said something to the first, about not making 'way with me—that the French recruiting officers would give ten thalers for such a sturdy chap. Then he too inquired if I had any money.

I swore I had none; but he was as incredulous as his comrade, and also searched my pockets. In one of them he found the thaler which had returned to my possession; and he too gave me a blow for telling him a lie.

Then came a third trooper with the same inquiry: "Have you money?"

I had not yet got used to having the thaler return to me, so I said:

"No, my friend, I haven't another penny"—and he didn't find anything in my pockets; but when, at his command, I drew off my boots, the thaler fell out of one of them.

From this trooper also I received a vigorous blow for lying. When the fourth, fifth, and sixth troopers followed with the same demand for money, I replied:

"Yes, friend, I think I have a thaler somewhere about my clothes—just search me and maybe you'll find it."

And every one of them found the thaler—once it was found tucked under the collar of my coat; another time in the lining; a third time in my neck-ruff.

My fun came afterward, when the troopers discovered they were minus the thaler they had taken from me. They accused one another of stealing, which led to a scuffle and blows.

I was sold for ten thalers to the Frenchmen, who, when they stripped me to put me into uniform, also searched my clothes. They found nothing; but when they were shearing my hair the thaler suddenly dropped to the floor.

The sergeant pounced on it, exclaiming:

"A thaler profit, comrades!—we'll have a drink at once!"

Beer was ordered from the inn, in which they were quartered; and while they were drinking, the sergeant turned to me and said:

"Are you thirsty lad? You are? Very well, then, go into the yard, lift your face to the clouds, and open your mouth wide—it's raining heavily! When you have quenched your thirst from the clouds, stand guard at the gate."

I had to obey, and stand guard; but I did not quench my thirst with rain water.

After a while I heard loud voices in the bar-room. The inn-keeper's wife was accusing the soldiers of

stealing the thaler given to her by the sergeant for the beer. She said it had been taken from the drawer, while she was attending to her work in the kitchen.

"Which of you fellows stole the thaler?" angrily demanded the sergeant.

No one answered; whereupon the sergeant proceeded to flog the men, one after the other, with a bunch of hazel-switches. But the thaler was not found.

Then the five soldiers seized the sergeant, and paid back what he had loaned them; as each had received six blows, the number delivered to him in payment amounted to thirty.

"Fine discipline!" I said to myself. "Fine discipline, where the sergeant flogs his men, and the men flog the sergeant in turn! It's a fine service I've got into, I must say."

I thrust my hands into the pockets of my wide trunk-hose, and what do you suppose I found in one of them? The dangerous thaler! It had not occurred to the Frenchmen to search me!

"I don't see how such a thing could happen," in a puzzled tone, observed the prince.

"There is no mystery about it," returned the chair. "The coin was a 'breeding-thaler'—as it is called. A breeding-thaler will return to the pocket of its owner, no matter how often he may spend it. If, however, he bestows it as a gift on any one, it will not return to him; but to the person to whom he has given it."

"Ah, had I only known that sooner!" in a tone of deep regret, murmured the delinquent.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HUSBAND OF THE WIFE OF ANOTHER MAN.

The breeding-thaler was not of much use to me, for I was in a region where there was nothing I cared to purchase.

I was with the French camp in front of the city of Lille, where I had been assigned to the artillery, because I had admitted that I knew something about the management of cannon.

It was a miserable existence: crouched day and night in the trenches; or, on the lookout for the grenades, which were hurled into our camp from the city we were besieging.

But I could have endured all the hardships if I had had enough to eat. The French general would not allow any vivandières with spiritous liquors to enter the battery; the gunners, he said, must remain sober; and that they might not want to drink, they were given very little to eat, as eating promotes thirst. If I sent a sapper with a jug to the canteen for beer, he would invariably return with the empty jug, and swear he had lost the thaler I had given him on the way—which was true; for, no matter how often I tried it, the coin would be back in my pocket before the messenger had been gone five minutes. The consequence was I was in a continual state of hunger and thirst.

The officers, on the contrary, had plenty to eat and drink. They were always feasting and making merry in their tents.

My captain had in camp with him a companion of the gentler sex, who was not his wife, nor was she his sister, daughter, or mother—nor yet his grand-mother. This lady would sometimes accompany him on his tours of inspection, riding by his side, in a long silk habit, with a plumed cap on her head. She was a beautiful creature.

One day the general, who had got tired seeing so many women about, gave orders that every one not having a legal husband among his troops should leave the camp within twenty-four hours. That day my captain came to me, and after making believe he was come on business about the guns, said: "By the way, gunner, you look to me like a chap who was used to something better than loading cannon and sleeping on the ground—"

"And gnawing dry bread," I ventured to append.

He laughed, and said again:

"I've half a mind to appoint you my adjutant—how would that suit you?"

"I shouldn't object."

"Will you do me a small favor in return?"

"Whatever I can, sir."

"I should want you to keep a well-supplied table, and invite me to dine and sup. I, of course, will pay all expenses."

"That doesn't sound like a very hard task, sir," I replied.

"It isn't—only there's a condition goes with it. In order to entertain properly an officer of my rank, there will have to be a lady to do the honors of the table."

"But, where can I get the lady, sir?"

"I'll find one for you—the lady you have seen riding with me. She has long possessed my deepest respect."

I scratched my head back of the right ear:

"If you respect the lady so much, sir, why don't you marry her?"

"Stupid fellow!—because I already have a wife."

"Look here, sir," I said after a moment's deliberation, "I have eaten all sorts of ammunition bread during my experience as a soldier; I have cheated and stolen; but I have never occupied a position so low as the one you want me to accept."

"But, my lad, consider the advantages: Plenty to eat, and drink, and nothing to do—that is one alternative; the other: in the trenches night and day, bread and water! I will give you half an hour to think it over; if you refuse I shall offer the position to some one else—some one who is not so squeamish as you."

That was a long half hour!

I thought over what I had to lose if I accepted the position: Honor? I had very little left; but, if I had squandered it I had done so with my sword and musket, idled it away in a hundred ways—though never in the despicable manner suggested to me by my captain.

But I had been persecuted and cursed for trying to do good—what use to try again? Besides, I hadn't anything to lose: I might as well eat and drink away the little self-respect and honor I still possessed.

At the end of the half hour, the captain came for my decision. I said:

"I accept your offer, sir—here's my hand on it!"

I held out my hand, and so did he; but, before they came together, each of us drew back—each prompted by the same thought: "This fellow's hand is more soiled than mine—I cannot take it!"

But, I married the donna that afternoon, bestowing on her one of my numerous names; and after the chaplain of the regiment had performed the ceremony, this thought involuntarily suggested itself to me: "Hugo, my lad, you are not the only one cheated in this business."

From that hour it went well with my body—and luckily one's stomach does not possess a conscience! In addition to a well-filled larder and cellar, I had a title—I was called "adjutant."

I saw my bride only at table; how frequently the captain visited my quarters I cannot say. When he was obliged to absent himself on duty connected with the campaign, he would always try to surprise her by an unexpected return.

One day she was more than surprised when her lover was brought back to camp minus his head; he had had the misfortune to get within range of a cannon shot from the enemy's lines.

My situation now became anything but agreeable. I ceased to be an adjutant, but I was still the husband of my wife—a rôle I found it exceedingly difficult to continue. The woman had been accustomed to every luxury; but, as money does not fall from the sky, I found great difficulty in providing her with the bare necessities of life. One after another of the costly ornaments she had received from the captain were disposed of to supply her numerous demands, until all were gone. Then she began to quarrel with me and accused me with trying to starve her.

I bethought me of the magic coin I had carried in my pocket all this time, merely as a souvenir of the demon-assembly in the Black Forest. I said to it: "Now, thaler, show what you can do!" and gave it to the woman to buy what was necessary.

I did not know then that if a breeding-thaler were given away it would not return; and when I placed it in the woman's hand I believed, of course, I should find it again in a few minutes in my pocket.

But I never saw the thaler again!

When, at the expiration of several hours, it did not return to me, I consoled myself with thinking it must be in the woman's pocket. But it had not returned to her—she had given it to an ensign who had been an admirer of hers for a long time. So, the magic thaler was gone for good, and I had nothing but the woman I had married to please my captain—and he was dead!

What was to be done? Should I run away from my

wife, and my flag?—become a two-fold deserter? I pondered over this question for three days; for three long days I endured the taunts of my wife, and the ridicule of my comrades, and on the third I fled—

"I should have run away the first day!" emphatically exclaimed the prince, giving the table a thump with his fist.

The mayor's eye twinkled as he added:

"Consequently, desertion may also be stricken from the register!"

(*Quod dixi dixi.*)

# PART XIII.

## THE EXCHANGE OF BODIES.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE QUACK DOCTOR.

"Well, you godless reprobate," began the mayor, addressing the prisoner, when the court was assembled the next day for a further hearing of the remarkable case, "you have come to the last of your crimes; you have illustrated how the seven mortal sins may be trebled, and how the perpetrator may clear himself of the entire twenty-one, if he possesses a fluent tongue. With your entertaining fables you have understood how to extend the time of your trial five months and two weeks, believing, no doubt, that the Frenchmen would in the meantime seize the fortress and save you from the gallows. But that has not come to pass. Only one more indictment remains on your list—Treason. I don't believe you will be able to talk yourself out of that! But we will now hear you make the attempt."

The prisoner bowed and summoned to his aid the muse, by whose help he had wrested from death one

day after another, to assist him win yet another twenty-four hours in God's beautiful world.

As the honorable gentlemen of the court are aware, I entered into service here, after I deserted from the French camp at Lille—and I have tried to do my duty faithfully, as becomes a good soldier—

"I must say"—interrupted the prince with considerable stress—"you were the best gunner in my artillery."

After he had thanked his highness for the compliment, the prisoner resumed:

One day, while I was deeply absorbed in my technical studies, a quack doctor was brought to my quarters. He had announced that he was my messenger to the camp of the enemy, and that he had returned with some important information for me.

He was an imposter; I had not employed any one to perform such errands for me. I ordered the fellow to be brought before me. He was of low, but vigorous stature, with a crafty countenance, and cunning leer. He had with him an entire apothecary's outfit: a chest filled with all sorts of oils, extracts, unguents, and pills.

The fellow laughed in my face and said in an impudent tone:

"Well, comrade, don't you know me?"

"No; I have never before seen your ugly phiz," I replied, a trifle angrily.

"Nor have I *seen* yours; but I know you for all that—Belphegor."

I was startled. "You are Behoric?" I exclaimed. I sent the orderly from the room, then asked:

"How did you manage to find me? You never saw me without a mask."

"I will tell you: I have two magic rings; one I wear on the little finger of my right hand; the other on the little finger of my left hand, both with the setting turned inward. If I say to the rings: 'I want to find my blood-comrade, Belphegor,' one of them turns around on my finger and the setting shows me the way I must go. If I arrive at a point where two roads meet, the other ring shows me which to take. That is how I came here."

The explanation did not altogether satisfy me—the fellow's face made me doubt the truth of it; but I could not deny that I was his blood-comrade. Besides, I entertained a sort of affection for him; we had been good comrades, and had not drank each other's blood for nothing.

"Well," said I, after deliberating a moment, "what brings you here?—here, where nothing is to be got but fiery bullets."

"I came to ask you to exchange bodies."

'Why do you wish to exchange?"

The leader has ordered it."

'Do you still belong to the satyrs?"

"Yes—and so do you. It is not a disease from which one can recover; nor an office one may resign. It is not a garment one may cast aside; nor a wife one may divorce. In a word, once a satyr, always a satyr."

"I pledged only my body, not my soul," I interrupted.

"And it isn't your soul I want, comrade; only your body. You may carry your soul in my body, and go whithersoever it may please you to wander."

"But, what shall I do while in your body?"

"You will do what I should do: sell theriac and arsenic; *lapis nephriticus*, *nostra paracelsi*, apoponax, and salamander ointment—for all of which you will receive good, hard coin from the credulous fools who will be your customers. It is the easiest life in the world!"

"But I don't know the least thing about your medicaments, and couldn't tell what any of them would heal or cure."

"Oh, you need not trouble your head about that! Just take a look into this chest. See—here in the different compartments are arranged various bottles, vials and boxes, with the names of their contents above them. These tiny letters under each one, which cannot be read without the aid of a magnifying glass, are the names of the diseases for which the contents of the bottles, vials, and boxes are infallible remedies. When a patient applies to you, listen what he has to say; then, diagnose the disease, consult your microscopic directions, and dose him according to his ability to pay."

"And how long will I have to wear your hideous form and let you occupy my stately proportions?" I asked.

"Until we both desire to exchange again. I will give you one of my magic rings and I'll keep the other. If you turn the ring on your finger at the same moment I turn mine, then the exchange will be effected, no matter how far apart our bodies may be. Now, take this ring, and summon your orderly. Bid him escort me to the gate, and give me a glass of brandy before he lets me depart."

I obeyed these directions and, after a few minutes, the burning in my throat convinced me that I was in Behoric's squat body; that he occupied my taller shell I found very shortly.

Hardly had the exchange taken place, when a bombardier came to announce that the second cannon in the third battery had burst, whereupon Behoric in my body answered:

"Boil some glue, and stick the pieces together; then wind some stout twine around the cannon to prevent it from bursting again."

At these directions the bombardier and the orderly exchanged glances and snickered.

"This won't do at all," I said to myself, so I whispered to my figure: "Behoric, just change back again for a second, will you?"

Each turned the ring on his finger, and I was again I.

"Take the broken cannon to the arsenal," I said to the grinning bombardier, "and put in its place one of the bronze pieces from chamber number IV. Why do you laugh, idiot?"

Then Behoric and I exchanged again, and I found myself trudging in his body down the hill from the fortress, with the medicine chest on my back. I was obliged to pass through the beleaguerer's camp, and, naturally, was commanded to halt. When they spoke to me I could not understand them—I, who am perfectly familiar with French, Latin, English, Polish, Russian, Turkish, Indian, Dutch—I, with Behoric's untutored ears, and with his inability to converse in any language but the German, could not understand a word the Frenchmen said to me. The colonel was obliged to send for an interpreter.

"Have you been inside the fortress?" I was asked.

"I have."

"Did you deliver to the chief gunner what I sent with you?"

"I did."

"Will he do what I ask?"

"He will."

Here, to my great surprise—for I had done nothing to earn it—the colonel pressed fifty thalers into my palm, and motioned me to pass on my way.

I wandered out into the world, trudged from city to city, selling the contents of my chest, until I came to Madgeburg, where, having accumulated a considerable sum of money, I bought a horse and wagon. I could now travel about with greater convenience and speed than when forced to carry the heavy medicine-chest on my back. I also hired an assistant to blow a trumpet when I wanted to collect a crowd around my wagon.

I became so well satisfied with the pleasant life I now led, no thought of changing back to my own body ever occurred to me. My blood-comrade might keep it, and continue to fire cannon from Ehrenbreitstein—I was quite content with my quack-doctoring, and with his anatomy.

And a wonderfully shrewd and sensible little anatomy it was! My own did not contain a tenth part the sense that was in his. Therefore, I considered it my duty to bestow the best of care on it. I fattened it with the same attention to details I would have observed had it been my own and I was amply able to supply it with everything that was necessary to increase its bulk.

I had all the money I wanted. The regular doctors became impoverished; for, to me alone would the people apply for help—and I must say the remedies I sold accomplished wonders.

One day, however, a misfortune occurred to me. I was selling my miracle-cures in the market place in Madgeburg as fast as I and my assistant could hand them out, when some one—a wretch hired by the envious doctors, no doubt—thrust a piece of burning sponge into the ear of my horse. You may guess the result.

The horse ran away, the wagon was upset, and my medicaments scattered in all directions.

My neck was not broken, but what happened was almost as bad. When I came to replace the medicaments in the chest, I found that I could not remember

just where each bottle, vial, and box properly belonged. However, I made a guess of it, and put them back where I thought they ought to be. I made a good many mistakes, though, judging by some of the very peculiar effects the remedies produced after the accident.

The syndic, whose right leg was shorter than the left, sent for me to remedy the defect. I was a little fuddled from having emptied a bottle of good French wine just before I quitted my lodgings; and, instead of rubbing the elongating ointment on the shorter limb, I applied it to the longer one; the consequence of which was: the longer leg increased to such a length that the worthy syndic, when he wanted to sit down, had to perch himself on the buffet, and would bump his head against the ceiling every step he took. He threatened to shoot me.

A second mischance occurred when I was called to attend the president of the Board of Trade. He had the gout in both feet and could not move without crutches. I had a certain remedy for that fell disease, a remedy so powerful that only a very small portion, about the size of a pea, was required to embrocate an afflicted member. Thinking to hasten the cure, I applied half the contents of a box to each foot, which made the old gentleman so active and nimble, he was forced, for a time, to take the position of runner for the Elector of Brandenburg, because he could not keep his feet still; nor could he sit anywhere but at a loom, where he might stamp his feet continually; and at

night, when he wanted to go to sleep he had to be bound to a tread-mill.

Two other wonderfully efficacious remedies were: a wash to force a luxuriant crop of curling hair to grow on a bald head; the other, if applied to toothless jaws, would cause new teeth to appear.

The result of getting these two remedies misplaced was: the tooth-wash was used on the bald head of a man; and the hair-restorative on the toothless jaws of a woman. Instead of hair, two beautiful horns appeared on the man's head; while the woman grew a mustache that would have roused the envy of a drum-major.

But these cases were nothing compared to what happened to the wife of the chief justice. She was afflicted with severe paroxysms of hiccoughing, and I was summoned to relieve her. There was in my chest a remedy for such an attack; but, having been misplaced, I got hold of the wrong box, and administered to the sufferer a dose of pills intended to force obstinate hens to produce eggs. In less than six weeks that unfortunate lady gave birth to seven living children—

"I don't believe it! I don't believe a single word of it!" interrupted the prince, who had almost burst his belt with laughing. "You are asking too much if you expect us to credit such outrageous fables.

Here the chair remarked with great seriousness: "Beg pardon, your highness: but there are authentic records of similar cases. In Hungary, the wife of a

Count Miczbanus gave birth at one time to seven living sons, all of whom lived to grow up."

"She certainly took some of the prisoner's hen pills," laughingly responded his highness.

The prisoner continued:

Naturally mistakes of this sort roused the animosity of the patients; but, none were so enraged as was the burgomaster. His case, indeed, capped the climax! I had two miraculous cures: one would cause to disappear from the human nose pimples, warts and all other disfiguring excrescences; the other would transform silver into gold.

The burgomaster possessed a large silver snuff-box and an exceedingly prominent and highly-colored nose which was covered with unsightly pimples. He sent for me in secret and bade me test the efficacy of the two miracle-cures on his snuff-box and on his nose.

Like some of the other remedies, these two had also changed places, in consequence of which, the burgomaster's nose turned to gold, while the snuff-box vanished as if from the face of the earth.

This cure so amused the prince he could hardly gasp:

"Enough—enough!—no more today! We will hear the rest tomorrow—I am faint with laughing."

The court adjourned until the following day, when the prisoner resumed his confession:

As might be expected, this last mistake of mine caused a dispute to arise. The burgomaster, however, was not so angry because his nose had changed to

gold; but nothing would console him for the loss of his snuff-box. He actually accused me of stealing it!

Had the worthy man been versed in the science of chemistry, he would have known that there are substances which absorb, and consume, each other. For instance: *argentum vivum* will dissipate *aurum;* and *aqua fortis* will consume silver as will a starving cow barley. This is called *occulta qualitas.*

The citizens of Madgeburg, however, are not clever enough to comprehend matters so transcendental in character. I was summoned to appear before the mayor, who, being father-in-law to a doctor, sentenced me, out of spite, to be flogged in public.

This did not suit me at all, so I said to myself: "Now, friend Behoric, I have been content to occupy your carcass without murmuring, so long as nothing more was required of me than to stuff it with liver-pasties and oysters; but, when it comes to having the hide tickled with a cat-o'-nine tails, then you had better come back into it!"

I was already bound to the pillory and the executioner had bared my back, revealing the marks of former scourging—of which I could remember nothing as they were on Behoric's body.

When the executioner saw that the whip would not be new to my blood-comrade's hide, he sent for a heavier scourge, the ends of which terminated with barbed nails.

"Now, Behoric," I said, "you must take this flogging yourself."

My hands being bound together, I had no difficulty turning the ring on my little finger. I had given it but one turn, when, to my great joy, I found myself in my own body, in my casemate in Ehrenbreitstein fortress; and before me stood his honor, here, with an empty fire-ball in one hand; in the other, what he called the "proofs of my treason."

I guessed at once what my blood-comrade had been doing, what crime he had committed while occupying my body.

The Frenchmen, who are leagued with the Bocksritter, had sent Behoric to the fortress, to take my place, and inform them what was going on in here. When he found that his crime had been discovered by his honor, the mayor, he said to himself: "It is time for Belphegor to return to his body;" and, as it happened, he turned his ring at the same moment I turned the one on my finger.

I can imagine his consternation when he found himself in the pillory in Madgeburg, with his back bared for the scourge; and I have to laugh every time I think of the grimaces he must have made when the barbed nails cut into his scarred hide!

This, your highness, and honorable gentlemen of the court, is the strictly veracious history of my last capital crime.

# PART XIV.

## THE WHITE DOVE.

The decision of the court at the conclusion of the long trial was as follows:

"Whereas: After hearing all the evidence, it has been found impossible to establish fully the exact nature of twenty-one of the twenty-two crimes, for which the prisoner has been indicted, the court has decided to pronounce him guilty of only the twenty-second and last on the register—'Treason.'

"But, as the prisoner avers that this transgression was committed by his blood-comrade, who occupied his, the prisoner's, body at the time the crime was committed; and that his, the prisoner's, *mind* was not cognizant of the blood-comrade's intentions when the exchange of bodies was effected, the court has decided to acquit the prisoner's mind and commend it to the mercy of God; and, that it may serve as a lesson to all miscreants who contemplate a similar crime, to sentence the body to death by a merciful shot in the back of the head."

The prisoner thanked the court for its clemency and assured the honorable gentlemen that he had no desire to postpone the execution of the just sentence.

When he was brought to the place of execution he removed his coat and hat, then requested, as a last favor, that his hands might be left free, and not bound behind his back, as he wished to clasp them on his breast in prayer.

The request was granted. He knelt, and in an audible tone repeated the Lord's Prayer. Then he turned toward the musketeers, who were waiting matches in readiness above the priming-pans, and said earnestly:

"Comrades, I beg you, when you shoot me, try also to kill the raven which is fluttering on my shoulder"—he glanced furtively toward his shoulder and added joyfully: "No! No! it is not the raven—it is my white dove—my precious white dove! She has come to bear my soul to the land wherein she now dwells! My good angel!—My Madus—my only love!"

Twelve musket shots rang out on the silent air, and the white dove soared away with the released soul.

FINIS.)

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